PART I – Overview of the Material

Introduction:
This catechetical material is designed for the parents of the first communicants to help them deepen their understanding and appreciation on the Eucharist.

Kind of Material:
This is a one-day recollection material for the parents of the fist communicants.

Audience:
This catechetical material is intended for the parents of the first communicants of a private Catholic school in an urban setting.

Situation:
Most of the parents are nominal Catholics. Some of them are still living together; some are already separated, while others are working abroad. They belong mostly to the middle class of the society. Most of them are working in different corporations while some of them are staying at home (housewife/husband). Basically, they can provide whatever needs for their children because of their high income/salary. Some of them live in subdivisions, villages, or condominiums.

Generally, the parents of the Grade 3 pupils are Catholic. They participate in the different school activities and their generosity is visible especially when it comes to Mass offering, outreach donation, and many others. But sometimes, as what we have observed, this act of generosity is often done to show off their status in the society.

The parents’ lack of appreciation of the Eucharist as a sacrament of Forgiving, Thanksgiving and Life-giving reflects on their children’s poor attendance and participation in the celebration.

Problem:
How to teach the parents to understand and fully appreciate the Eucharist?

Objectives:
This material is designed to lead the parents to:
Worship: Appreciate the sacrament of Eucharist as a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, and a Paschal Banquet

Doctrine: Understand how the Eucharist draws us into communion with Christ and with one another

Morals: Strive to live out the Eucharistic nature of love and unity within the family and with the larger community, the Church.

Significance of the Material:
Objective: The Eucharist is instituted by Christ in the Last Supper. It cultivates a “social love” by which the common good is given preference over our own individual desires. It is the sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity and a Paschal Banquet.

Subjective: The parents will be able to celebrate the Holy Eucharist more meaningfully with proper understanding and disposition that is reflected with the way they relate with their family members (love, respect, unity) and exemplified in their dealings with the larger community, the Church.

Scope and Limitations:
This catechetical material is intended for the parents of the first communicants to help them deepen their understanding and appreciation on the Eucharist.

This material will be divided into 3 sessions/talks which will only focus on the Eucharist as Forgiving, Thanksgiving and Life-giving. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist will be integrated in the recollection.

This material will particularly highlight the Eucharist not just a sacrament celebrated every Sunday as the Catholics’ highest form of worship but also as the mission of every baptized Catholic “to go and serve the Lord.”

Methodology:
This will be a topic on the Eucharist and we will develop this by using NCDP’s source integration, dimension integration, structure integration, and life integration. We also made use of the method see-judge-act-celebrate-evaluate.

The following are the sources used to explain each topic:

Church Teachings: CFC 1014 The Christian family, CFC 1702-1704 Eucharist as communion sacrament, sacred meal, sign of unity and bond charity, CFC 1706 Eucharistic Prayer, CFC 1719 On reconciliation.

Each talk will begin with a dynamic activity to be related on a certain Biblical passage and deepened on the interplay of the Sacred Scripture, Liturgy and Human Experience. This will lead the parents to understand the deeper meaning of the Eucharistic celebration even after this recollection.

Outline:
I. Introduction
A. Opening Prayer
B. Opening Remarks

II. Getting-to-know-you Activity
HUMAN BINGO

III. Talk 1: Eucharist as Forgiving
“Lord, have mercy”
Bible Text: Parable of the Prodigal Son

IV. Sacrament of Reconciliation

V. Talk 2: Eucharist as Thanksgiving
“It is right to give Him thanks and praise”
Bible Text: The Healing of the Ten Lepers

VI. Talk 3: Eucharist as Life-giving
“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”
Bible Text: Jesus and Zaccheaus

VII. Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

2nd Summer Grade School Group
Baja, Russel
Bayaton, Corazon Dulce
Buena, Noemi Grace
Dominise, Leslie
Laderas, Mae
Pascua, Maria Aiza Graciela Corazon
Pe, Jose Pepito

Mentors: Mr. Raoul Roncal & Ms. Rachel Sanchez
PART II – Material for the Parents

Introduction:
“Many are called but few are chosen.” We appreciate your effort setting aside your schedule for today as you come for the recollection in preparation of your children’s reception of the First Holy Communion. This recollection will be divided into three parts which will also highlight what we want you to gain at the end of this day: Eucharist as Thanksgiving, Forgiving and Life-giving.

With this, we need your cooperation to make this recollection a fruitful one. Hopefully even after this activity, we will be active partners in your children’s spiritual journey, that as one family, you will appreciate and love the Eucharist more and share it with the people around you.

Keypoint #1: Eucharist as FORGIVING
“Lord, have mercy.”

A. Activity: My Pains and Offenses

You will be given a piece of paper where you will write your answers on the following questions. This paper will be offered during the mass.
1. What offense of your love ones do you consider unforgivable?
2. What things caused by any of your family members hurt you?
3. What things have you done that hurt your family members?

Let us relate your experience to the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

B. Exposition and Reading of the Sacred Scripture:
Lk 15:12-24 – “The Prodigal Son”

Lk 15:12-13 The younger son said to his father, “Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.” So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

How would you react if your child asked for his/her inheritance? What would you feel if you’re the parent of the younger son? To ask for someone’s inheritance is like a subtle way of a child saying “Mom, Dad, I want you to die” or to put it lightly, “I have no need of you, I don’t want to be associated with you.” Not only that, the child just wasted his money. The situation is completely reprehensible.

Lk 15:14-19 When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck the country and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend his swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses, he thought, “How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”

How sincere is the younger son in the situation? The younger son never intended to ask forgiveness, he just went back because he was hungry.

Lk 15:20-24 So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him. He ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. The son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.” But his father ordered his servants, “Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.”

Point for Reflection:
- If you were the father, will you accept your child’s repentance?

Let us use the offenses you listed a while ago. What if your child eloped, was pregnant, failed in an exam, has behavioral problems (drugs, smoking, drinking, illicit sexual relations), has wrong set of friends, deliberately rebel and disobey you? What if your partner has extramarital affairs, incurred money problems etc? These are the realities occurring in our families nowadays. Despite all the protection, molding etc? These are the realities occurring in our families nowadays.

The Father’s immense love was revealed by His Son, Who, out of great love, suffered on the cross for the salvation of all – humankind and creation.

C. Interplay of Sacred Scripture, Liturgy and Human Experience

True forgiveness comes with a celebration. Like the Father of the Prodigal Son who celebrated the return of his Child, Our Father prepared a banquet for us through Christ in the Eucharist. We usually start the Eucharist by acknowledging our sinfulness and asking the forgiveness of God. It is evident in the Petential Rite when we say, “Lord, have mercy… Christ, have mercy.” and “I confess to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned, through my own faults, in my thoughts, in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do, so I ask the Blessed Mary, Ever Virgin, all the angels and saints and to you my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord our God.”

Furthermore, everytime we attend the Mass, we experience the forgiveness of God in the line of the Lord’s Prayer – “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sinned against us.”

More importantly, we encounter the forgiving love of the Father as we remember the salvific act of Christ in the cross made present in the Eucharist through the Spirit. Through the Eucharist, we can experience God’s overwhelming forgiving love in the very words of Christ in the Eucharistic Prayer:

“Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is MY BODY which will be given up for you... Take this all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of MY BLOOD, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of Me.”
I remember a neighbor who was abandoned by her husband leaving her with eight children to care. Survival was a struggle for this woman, she did everything to make all ends meet as she feed her eight children, send them to school, and tend to their needs. The husband left with another woman and enjoyed his life with her. He never gave any assistance to his family, and his eight children had to fend for themselves. When all his resources were used up, his mistress deserted him. His child found him on the stairs of his child’s workplace. His child took him home. Despite his wrongdoings against his family, his wife and children took care of him until he died. They forgave and embraced their father regardless of what he did to them. This story is one of the many realities in life exhibit the deep mystery of human forgiveness. How was this family able to forgive the father? Are you willing to forgive amidst all the hurt and pain the person caused you?

The greatest motivation for us to forgive others is the reality that God Himself has forgiven us. To reconcile and be reconciled is a major effect of the Holy Eucharist as the “sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity.” The Eucharist is one of the means of reconciliation in the Church. It brings us together around the table of the Lord, uniting us in sharing food and drink in a sacred meal hosted by Christ himself. Through the Eucharist, we can see the value of each person in the eyes of God. We became aware of the dignity of the person, our sinfulness and our being forgiven; thus giving us the motivation to celebrate the Eucharist meaningfully and fruitfully with joy and gratitude in our hearts.

D. Sacrament of Confession

**Keypoint #2: Eucharist as THANKSGIVING**

*It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

**A. Activity: (My List of Blessings)**

At the back of the paper given to you a while ago, list down all the things that you consider as blessings from God.

Questions:

1. How do you feel as you look at the blessings you received?
2. How do you express your gratitude for all these blessings?

**B. Reading and Exposition of the Sacred Scripture:**


**Points for Reflection:**

- What was the experience of the ten lepers which they consider as blessing?
- How did they express their gratitude after receiving the blessing?
- How is their experience similar to ours?

**C. Interplay of the Sacred Scripture, Liturgy and Human Experience**

If we will try to look at all the blessings we have written on the paper, we will realize that we have many things to thank God for. We have a beautiful house to live in, a beautiful family, a decent job, we are able to send our children to school and many others. These are testaments of the love of God that we have to be grateful for in the Eucharist.

There are times in our lives that we are like the nine lepers in the story who immediately left after being healed by Jesus. They never cared to say thank you as an acknowledgment of the act of Jesus. In our daily lives we often are not appreciative of the gifts that we receive. We always thought that we deserve to receive gifts from others. Like when we were young we are expecting that our parents would send us to school, buy us clothes, gives us presents. These expectations prevent us from recognizing their actions as gifts. Another example is when married couples expect their partner to do favors for them. Most of the time, couples are not appreciative of the simple and ordinary ways like cooking for their spouse, driving for his wife home, etc. Unfortunately, it will have to take an out-of-the-country trip before the wife says “thank you” to her husband. Again, these expectations make us become more forgetful of the actions of the other persons as gift.

Receiving blessings should merit a spontaneous act of gratefulness to the giver. Among the ten lepers in the story who got cured, only one returned and expressed gratitude—a foreigner whom Jesus least expected to show such behavior. This kind of thanksgiving exhibited by the Samaritan, is the same thanksgiving we offer to God in union with Jesus’ own thanksgiving within the Eucharist.

The Eucharist comes from the Greek word eucharistein which means thanksgiving. This act of thanksgiving was shown by Christ in the Last Supper. (Mt. 26: 26-30)

> “Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sin. I tell you, I will not drink this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in my father’s reign.”

The disciples remembered Jesus giving thanks during the last supper, not only because they are following a mere ritual activity, but they have a personal awareness of the union Jesus enjoyed with the Father as source of all goodness since Jesus is our perfect offering to God— all fruits of our works—material offerings, the bread and wine, together with our pains and joys, and everything of who we are.

Thus, in the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest would say: “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God”. The assembly would then reply, “It is right to give Him thanks and praise.” The priest would immediately say “All praise and thanks be yours, Lord Jesus Christ, because by your Holy Spirit you reign in the hearts of your faithful.” Through this prayer we are affirming God’s goodness, thus, He is worthy of all our praise and we give thanks directly to the Father, through Jesus Christ. With that, it is but proper to say this prayer loudly and with conviction in the Eucharist.

Moreover, when we participate fully in the Eucharist constant thanksgiving will eventually build on us, and this thanksgiving will be reflected in our daily living. We will find ourselves becoming more aware and ever more grateful for all the good things God gives us every day, thereby allowing our whole lives to become a symphony of praise and thanksgiving to God.

**Keypoint #3: Eucharist as LIFE-GIVING**

*“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”*

**A. Activity: Song Analysis – Amare et Servire**

*In Omnibus Amare (In everything love)*

*In Omnibus Servire (In everything serve)*

*In Omnibus Amare et servire domino (In everything love and serve the Lord)*

**Guide Questions:**

- What did you feel while singing the song?
- What line from the song struck you most? Why?
- What do you think is the meaning and implication of the song in our Christian life?

**B. Reading and Exposition of the Sacred Scripture:**

At this point in your life, have you done something to resonate God’s love for you? Let us now open our Bible on the Gospel of Luke 19:1-10 and reflect some important events in the life of Zacchaeus which might be helpful for us to examine ourselves. How are we as regards to our relationship with God and others?

(Short Silent Reflection with instrumental music)

**Guide Question:**

- How did Zacchaeus express his joy since he received Jesus’ forgiveness?

**C. Interplay of the Sacred Scripture and Human Experience**

Out of Zacchaeus joy of having been given another chance and forgiven, he was deeply moved to give back and return the goodness of Christ by means of his good act by expressing “Half of my goods, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much” and because he received something good from Christ. He was so grateful that he could not hold it and keep it in himself, instead he share and proclaim it by means of giving back and returning what is due to people. Being empowered and strengthened by Christ love, Zacchaeus began to begin living a life of service for God’s people. The closest experience that we can associate to Zacchaeus in terms of sharing his joy to others is our own experience with our parents. Our parents have shared everything that they have in order for us to have a good life. Allow me to share this story that I heard from a friend. There was this poor family whose usual meal was fish. Every time they ate, the eldest sibling observed that his parents would always eat the head of the fish and the rest of the parts would be given to them. The eldest son began to wonder and tasted the “head of the fish” without his parent’s awareness and to his surprise he found out that the taste was not that good. Thus it led him to ponder why his parents were so happy eating the “head of the fish” even if the taste is not pleasant.

Maybe you may find the story very simple and plain yet it conveys something for us, it speaks of how our parents as life givers. We may not know what they are going through, but because of their desire to give us a better life they are very much willing to give as long as they can offer something for us. In the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we remember and make present the total self-giving of Christ as expressed in 1 Corinthians 24 “…and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’” Thus, every time we receive the body and blood of Christ we are also drawn in communion with Christ through the power of the Spirit to be the source of life for others. This does not necessarily mean giving something or doing something extraordinary for others, but it is all about rendering selfless service starting from our family and continued in the community where we belong. Like the parents in the story they are happy in doing such thing for their children despite the uneasiness that they are experiencing because it is done in the context of love. This is the same challenge that was given to us in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist where in we are empowered by the priest to “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”. This means that we are called to share the peace that we receive from Christ in our humble acts of service to our family, friends and wider community, “the Church.” Furthermore with this blessing in the Mass, we are called to be a source of life in order to build the body of Christ and making Christ present in each one of us.

**Points for Reflection:**

- How do you value God’s goodness and love for you? Have you been a source of joy and love for your family, friends and members of the community or are you the source of suffering and misery? What concrete acts/deeds have you done willingly?

**D. Synthesis**

We celebrate the Eucharist as the highest form of worship as ONE community, we give thanks to the Father through the Son in the Spirit, we humble ourselves & ask for forgiveness and finally, we live our lives in love and service to God and to other people. Thus the Eucharist is not just a celebration done once a week, but it is a celebration that strengthens and empowers us to be a source of life to our family, friends and the members of our society by means of our humble acts of love & service.

**E. Celebration of the Holy Eucharist**

**Integration:**

**Worship:** The Eucharist is the sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity and a Paschal Banquet.

**Doctrine:** We who ate the one blessed, broken Bread that is Christ, were drawn into communion with him and with one another, to form one single body with him.

**Moral:** The Eucharist as life-giving cultivates a “social love” by which the common good is given preference over our own individual desires.