

The Mass and Children

Kids grow into Mass by attending with their families with a welcoming adult community. Like fine wine, the Mass is a complex rite, aged in the faith of centuries, and very much an adult experience. It would be a rare child who could appreciate what's going on all through the Mass. Is there any good way around such a dilemma? Sure, there are several, but they are long-term things.

- **A top priority:** grow in the Eucharist as a family. Learn about living the Eucharist, and how to prepare your kids for First Eucharist.
- **Get to know Jesus.** This is the real solution, but it takes time. The disciples or other early Christians gradually got to know Jesus. They were moved by his words. They saw him heal the blind, lame, and the diseased. They saw him forgive sins. Jesus did not have to convince them that the kingdom of God had arrived. Their hearts were warmed by the glow of God's glory within Jesus: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us?" (*Luke 24:32*)
- **Purchase a children's version of the New Testament.** Getting to know Jesus means soaking up the Gospels and being moved by Jesus. Let your children absorb the parables and stories, so they can feel love for the man Jesus was—not just understand facts about his life. Facts must come, but they can be learned later.
- **Emphasize the connectedness of Eucharist.** Long after Jesus ascended to the Father, whenever his followers celebrated the Eucharist, they felt their bond with him and he was with them. They experienced the joy and energy of praying together with other people who were blessed to share in the Eucharist with them. The Eucharist is a celebration of friends—both past and present.