

GROWING UP CATHOLIC MASS TRANSIT CARDS

Lectionary-based conversation starters for families

The Challenge Today

Eucharist is Who We Are

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium* #11). Sunday Mass is a time when we physically come together as a Catholic community each week. It is a time when we tell our story. It is a time for rest and renewal, for prayer and quiet reflection, and a chance to be reminded of God’s care and love for us. It is a time when we receive the Body of Christ so that we can more fully *become* the Body of Christ. It is an experience that prepares us, yet again, to be sent forth to help transform the world into the Kingdom of God.

Missing in Action

Somewhere along the way, however, we have not been able to convince Catholic parents of the value and necessity of the Eucharist in helping their children grow into faith-filled, well-adjusted adults. We don’t need to take a survey to see that many families simply do not attend Mass. Even if their children faithfully attend the formation sessions provided by the parish, do the home assignments, and receive the sacraments, many do not see Mass as the principal component of their faith life.

Why is This Happening?

Other things take precedence. Sports, work schedules, lack of interest, sleeping in, lack of understanding, resistant kids.... and the list goes on. We know that parents want their children to have the tools they need to meet the world head-on and not only survive but make a contribution for the good of society. Many parents just don’t see the role of the Mass in that process. So they pour a whole lot of effort and money into sports, education, manners, appearance, etc. These goals are important, but without the spiritual component and grace of the Eucharist, they can often leave children missing what they need most.

A Tool that Can Help

What Are Mass Transit Cards?

The *Growing Up Catholic Mass Transit Cards* resource helps parents and their children reflect on each week’s Mass readings and help them see the way these scripture passages relate to their own family life. We created this resource for the busy family on the run. It’s short, easy to use, and portable enough to take along in the car. Just as sports and academic challenges require preparation, so does Mass. Children (and parents!) need to ready their hearts and minds to be active participants in the Eucharist. In the process of helping their children understand the message and apply it to their lives, parents will also come to a greater awareness of all the Mass has to offer *them* in their daily journey, with all its joys and struggles.

How Do The Mass Cards Work?

The resource includes a card for each Sunday in the academic year. The front of each card notes the day, the lectionary readings, a key quotation from one of the readings, a family-friendly reflection, a one or two-sentence prayer, and a reflection question. The back of each card provides some simple questions to answer on the card, including what Mass they attended, the color of the priest’s vestments, one insight from the homily, and something special they noticed at Mass that day.

Using the Cards

Motivating Families to Use Them

We highly recommend that you give families some extra incentive to use these cards each week. We have found that an effective way to do this is to ask families to bring their completed cards to faith formation classes each week (be sure to have them fill in their name). Decorate a box with a removable lid, cutting a slit in the top so the families can deposit their cards. At some point in the session draw three cards and read them aloud, which shares their insights and reminds other families of the resource. Then award a small prize to each of the families whose cards were chosen.

Choose prizes that will reinforce their Catholic identity and help bring faith into their home. For example:

- Story books for kids (see <http://pastoral.center/child-story-books>)
- Books and booklets for parents (see <http://pastoral.center/parents>)
- Seasonal items, especially for Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter.
- Kids crafts, booklets, and activities (see <http://catholic.creativecommunications.com>)
- Saint cards, statues, and other sacramentals.

Introducing the Cards

At the beginning of the faith formation year, in August or September, make double-sided copies of the cards. You may wish to use a heavier card stock rather than plain paper.

Families could prepare the cards right at the parish (which overcomes one barrier to using them). They should cut the cards on the dotted lines, and can make an envelope out of the instruction page. The cards should then be put in their car's glove compartment so they can read them on the way to and from Mass.

Although directions are provided so parents will know how to use the cards, it won't hurt to go over the directions with them. You can remind them of these points:

- On the way to Mass, one of the children (or a parent, if the children are too young to read) should read the front of the card that has the explanation of one of the scripture readings they'll hear at that Mass, a short prayer, and a question to discuss.
- Parents should challenge the children to listen carefully so they will notice when they hear that reading during the Mass. Perhaps the children can give their parents a wink or a nudge when they hear it.
- On the way home from Mass, someone should read the back of the card and lead the discussion of what they noticed. They can take turns writing the answers to the questions.

It may take a little while for families to develop the habit of using the cards. But we have found that once they get started, parents are happy to have this simple resource to help form themselves and their children in the faith.

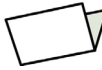
Mass Transit Cards. Copyright © 2017, Patricia Giunta & Jennifer Bartley. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Published by The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Growing Up Catholic Mass Transit Cards

These cards will help your family reflect on the readings before you hear them at Mass. That will allow you to more actively participate at Mass and receive every blessing our Lord offers.

Prepare the envelope



1. Fold this paper on the dotted line.



2. Staple the sides to make an envelope.

Prepare the cards



1. Cut along the dotted lines.



3. Put the envelope in your car's glove compartment. If you walk or bike, put them where you'll remember them!



2. Put the cards in the envelope.

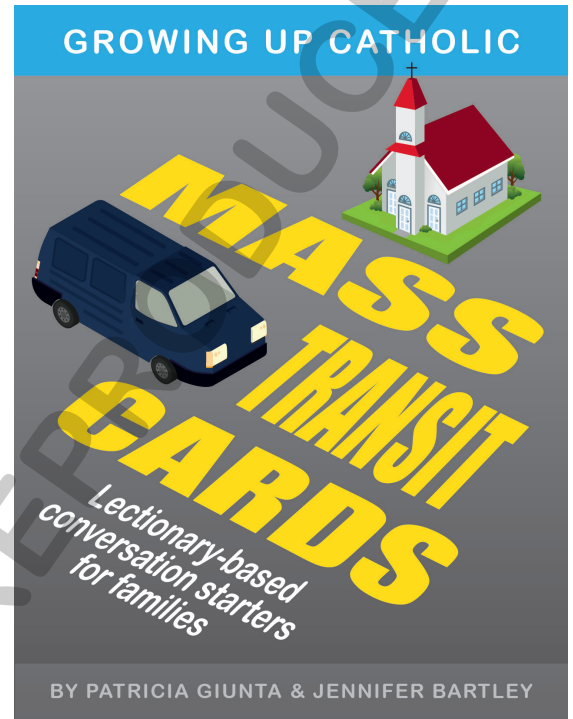
Each Sunday



1. On the way to Mass, read the front of the cards together and then discuss the reflection.



2. After Mass, discuss the questions on the back of the card and take turns filling in the answers.



August 2, 2026

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55:1-3 ♦ Romans 8:35, 37-39 ♣ Matthew 14:13-21

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds.” —Matt. 14:19

When a family welcomes a new baby into their home, one of the nicest things we can do is bring a meal to them so the new parents can rest and care for the baby instead of having to cook. If your parent makes a meal and sends you to deliver it, you are the lucky one to get a big “Thank You,” even though it was your parent who did all the work.

Today’s Gospel tells of a time when Jesus provided a meal for thousands of hungry people using only a few pieces of bread and some fish. He miraculously multiplied the food, but then he gave it to the disciples to pass on to the people. During mass, when we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in Holy Communion, Jesus gives us the power to pass on his message of love to everyone we meet. It’s not we who make this happen, but Christ in us.

Dear Jesus, please help me to pass on your love to all those I meet this week.

What is something that is precious to you that would be hard to give up so that others could have some too? Remember, with God’s help, even this is possible!

August 16, 2026

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7 ♦ Romans 11:13-15, 29-32 ♣ Matthew 15:21-28

“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” —Matt. 15:28

What does it mean to have faith? Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is believing in something you can’t see. If I told you that you will definitely make the baseball team this year, would you believe me even before you try out? Perhaps if I was the baseball coach and had seen you practice before you might. If I told you it will rain tomorrow, would you believe me? Perhaps if I was the weather reporter on TV you might. In today’s Gospel, Jesus grants the wish of a woman who pleads with him to heal her daughter. He said he did this because she showed great faith by not giving up even though he didn’t grant her request right away. When we pray, do we believe that God will hear and answer us, even if it takes a while, or even if the answer isn’t what we expected?

Lord God, please give me the patience to wait for your answer to my prayers. Help me to trust that you know what’s best for me.

Gather your family together today and tell each other what you would like God to help you with this week. Then close your eyes and pray for each other’s needs.

August 9, 2026

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a ♦ Romans 9:1-5 ♣ Matthew 14:22-33

***At once [Jesus] spoke to them,
“Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” —Matt. 14:27***

Have you heard the slogan, “Seeing is believing”? It means that you will not believe something unless you see it for yourself. That’s generally a good way to measure if something is real, but not necessarily if something is *true*. For instance, in today’s Gospel, we read about Jesus walking on water. We can understand why his disciples have a hard time believing their eyes. Jesus invited Peter to try walking on water and to Peter’s surprise—so long as he kept his eyes on Jesus—he succeeded. To us, this seems unreal. But it is revealing a truth that cannot be denied: Jesus is God and with God all things are possible. Even if we can’t understand how or why God does things, we can trust that he has our best interest in mind. His plans for us are always good; if we keep our sights set on Jesus, we will eventually see God’s plans revealed.

Lord, help me to trust you. There are so many ways you have shown me that you are Almighty God. Remind me again, Jesus, so my faith will grow strong enough to believe even what seems impossible.

Look at nature. How many things do you see that could only have been created by God?

August 23, 2026

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 22:19-23 ♦ Romans 11:33-36 ♣ Matthew 16:13-20

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” —Matt. 16:16

Who are the people in your family who have a key to your house? When I was young, I did not receive a key until I showed that I could be responsible with it. If my parents saw that I left my house key outside or if I invited friends in when my parents were not home, I would lose the privilege of having my own key for a while. In today’s Gospel, Jesus gives the “keys to the kingdom of heaven” to Peter. First, he asked Peter a question to be sure he would be able to use the keys wisely. He asked Peter if he knew Jesus’ identity. Peter answered correctly. He said that Jesus is the Son of God. This showed that Peter truly believed in Jesus. Because of Peter’s great faith, Jesus gave him the responsibility to lead his Church as our first pope. Each pope has the same task as Peter did—to listen carefully to God so they can lead us to know, love, and serve him.

Thank you, Jesus, for giving us good leaders. Help them to always do what is best for your people in the Church.

Say a prayer today for our pope. He is human just like us and needs our prayers to serve as Jesus would want him to.

Answer the following questions together after Mass:

What Mass did you attend this week? _____

What color were the priest's vestments? _____

What was one new insight the homily gave you?

Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?

Name: _____

Mass Transit Cards. Copyright © Patricia Giunta & Jennifer Bartley. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Published by The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.

Answer the following questions together after Mass:

What Mass did you attend this week? _____

What color were the priest's vestments? _____

What was one new insight the homily gave you?

Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?

Name: _____

Mass Transit Cards. Copyright © Patricia Giunta & Jennifer Bartley. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Published by The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.

Answer the following questions together after Mass:

What Mass did you attend this week? _____

What color were the priest's vestments? _____

What was one new insight the homily gave you?

Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?

Name: _____

Mass Transit Cards. Copyright © Patricia Giunta & Jennifer Bartley. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Published by The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.

Answer the following questions together after Mass:

What Mass did you attend this week? _____

What color were the priest's vestments? _____

What was one new insight the homily gave you?

Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?

Name: _____

Mass Transit Cards. Copyright © Patricia Giunta & Jennifer Bartley. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Published by The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.