

GATHERING AROUND THE ALTAR AND THE TABLE

At Mass we gather around the Altar, our shared table of sacrifice. This shared meal follows a set rubric, or order in which it is celebrated. While at times that may make it seem boring, our own family meals or celebrations also tend to follow a set order.

Follow the directions below on blank sheet of paper to reflect on your family's table and shared meals. After reflecting on your family's shared meals, reflect on how the Mass is also a shared meal with family.

- Draw the shape of your family table.
- Around the outer edge of your family table, place a square where each person in your family sits.
- To designate the various family members, assign each of them a shape, symbol, and/or color. This can be on the table itself where a placemat would be.
- Think of your favorite family gathering where food is part of the gathering. Is it a birthday, holiday, or other special occasion? Or is it a particular meal, such as Sunday dinner? Write that occasion at the top of your piece of paper.
- What makes that occasion special for your family? Jot down your thoughts in one corner of the paper.
- What do you like most about this occasion and the meal that accompanies it? Jot down your thoughts in another corner of the paper.
- Are there foods that your family traditionally eats at this meal? What are they? Add those to the center of your table.
- Why is this meal important to you and to your family? Jot down your answer in another corner of the paper.
- What is your role in preparing and participating in this special meal?
- Now think about the Mass as a family celebration or meal. Who usually comes?
- Do you have a favorite place to sit? Do you have a favorite song you like to sing?
- What makes the food we receive at Mass so special?
- What do you like most about Mass?
- How do you participate in the Mass as a special meal?