



## School and Religious Education Program Invitation

### Lesson Plan

### Grade 1

#### Preparation

**Personal Reflection:** So that you have a better understanding of the need for and purpose of this lesson, read Archbishop Perez's pastoral letter regarding the *Nothing Compares to Being There Initiative*. It can be found at <https://archphila.org/nothingcompares/> Explore the additional information and links found on the web site.

Although they have not yet received Holy Communion, the children can begin to participate more fully in the life of the Church by learning more about the Mass and about how they can take part in the Celebration of the Mass.

#### Learning Objectives/Goals

- The students will realize that when you don't see/visit someone for a long time, you miss them and want to be with them even more.
- The students will learn that the Mass is a special way for them and their families to come back to God and that the season of Advent is a good time for them to do this.

## Activities

1. Begin the lesson by asking the children how they felt last year when they had to stay home all of the time and couldn't visit their relatives and friends. Ask them to tell you about the places they used to visit but couldn't visit because they had to stay home. Let them share why they liked to visit these places. Tell them that one of the places that you missed going to was church and ask them if any of them missed being able to go to church. (At this level most will tell you that they did.)
  
2. Tell the children that next year—when they are in second grade—they will be preparing to receive their First Holy Communion. At that time, Jesus will come to them in a very special way.
  - a. Tell them that this year they can start getting ready by learning about the special way we pray in Church at Mass.
  - b. Tell them that this is a very good time for them to begin this as we are in a time of "getting ready." We call this time Advent because we are getting ready to celebrate the day when Jesus was born—Christmas.
  - c. Tell them that they can give Jesus a very special gift this Christmas by learning what to do in Church during Mass and by visiting Him every Sunday in Church.
  
3. If the parish church is in close proximity to the school, make arrangements to take the children over to church and give them a "tour" of the church:
  - a. As you enter the church, tell them that it is very important to remember that in God's house we show respect by keeping very quiet so that others who are there can pray.
  - b. Show them the pews and kneelers, telling them that this is where the people sit to listen and kneel to pray. Teach them to genuflect before getting into the pew, making sure that they are facing the altar and whispering a short prayer as they do. (A simple "I love You, Jesus" is good at this level.) Tell them

that, when they genuflect, it is a sign of telling God that they love Him.

- c.** Show them the altar. Tell them that this is a special table that is used during Mass where Father gets everything ready for Jesus to come to us in Holy Communion. Tell them that they will learn a lot more about this in second grade when they are preparing for their First Holy Communion.
  
- d.** Show them the statues, stained-glass windows, and Stations of the Cross. Tell them that these are here to remind us of Jesus, Mary and the Saints and, when they get older, they will learn more about these holy people.
  
- e.** When they return to the classroom, give them the attached worksheet and have them use the word bank to identify each picture on the paper. Have them take the paper home and put it in a special place to remind their family to go to Church each week to “visit Jesus.”
  
- f.** Prepare a bulletin board/poster with the title, “BIRTHDAY GIFTS FOR JESUS. Tell them that every time they go to Mass before Christmas, they can place a “gift” under the tree. Have a supply of gifts cut out for this purpose.
  
- g.** Beginning in Advent, teach the children the shorter prayers and responses used during Mass. Include these as part of your daily prayer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Altar**

**Pew**

**Statue**

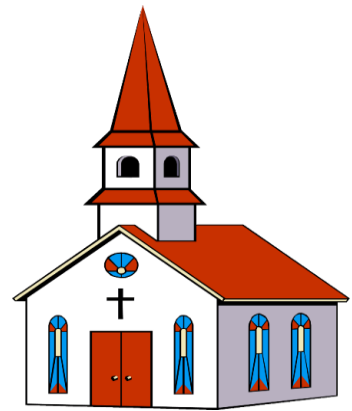
**Church**



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# Birthday Gifts for Jesus



**Have a small supply of blank squares ready. Every time a student goes to church during Advent, let them decorate a blank square like a gift and put it on the board under the tree.**