***LSW***

children

If there is time

*Explain that the mass is where we eat our spiritual food and it is mealtime just like our dinner time at home. At home, we have a dining table, with a table cloth, and food & drink on the table. At mass, we have a dining table (the altar), with a table cloth (altar cloth), and food & drink on the table (bread & wine).*

*Just like the dining table, we also have table manners for the meal at mass. We have to turn up on time, dressed properly, with clean hands (and clean spirits). It is also a good opportunity to go through the table manners again with those who are going for communion:*

* *Ask for the food politely (palm raised high, as if you are really eager for it, and don’t grab it before it reach your palm)*
* *Put it in your mouth straight away (and not play with your food) with the non-receiving hand instead of popping it all into your mouth*
* *Eat it quietly, with the mouth closed and no chewing noise (yes, you can chew: your physical teeth is biting into the physical bread, not the spiritual Body of Jesus)*
* *Say thank you, with an acknowledgement (some people do a sign of the cross) and a prayer.*

Year A

**Solemnity of Body and Blood of Christ**

Second Sunday after Pentecost

**Image**

Spiritual Sustenance

**Points to note**

If there is a celebration of First Communion, it will be good to refer to it, especially if any of the children know of family or friends who will be receiving Jesus for the first time at that celebration.

The key thing in this discussion is that we are both body and spirit. Each has its own realm and each has its own sustenance. The Holy Communion is spiritual food for our spiritual bodies. To me this is the simple answer to differentiating between the Real Presence of the Body of Jesus and apparent appearance of bread.

In the past, we used to struggle with insisting that the communion wafer is really the body of Jesus, just that it doesn’t look it. For me, it is the real body of Jesus, spiritual body and not physical body, though.

One more point, this is the day in our annual liturgical calendar when we celebrate the consecration at the Last Supper, not Holy Thursday.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven,

says the Lord, anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

Alleluia!

## Gospel

*Jesus has just fed the multitudes with bread and is teaching the disciples about the significant of the miracle.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Jn 6:51-58)

Jesus said to the Jews:

“I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;

and the bread I shall give is my flesh,

for the life of the world.”

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked. Jesus replied:

“I tell you most solemnly,

if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man

and drink his blood, you will not have life in you.

Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood

has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

He who eats my flesh and drink my blood

lives in me and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father,

myself draw life from the Father,

so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven;

not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead,

but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Let’s start with everyone’s favourite topic: food. What is your favourite food?

Why do we eat? *To keep us alive. To keep us healthy. To give us strength. Elaborate on each of these.* How long can we last without food?

You said we eat to give us strength. Give us strength to do what? *Elaborate on the kind of work that we will do with strength in us.*

*Explain that each one of us alive have a physical body as well as a spirit. Having one without the other would normally mean that you are dead. Explain that just as the physical body eats physical food to stay alive, keep its physical body healthy and get physical strength to do physical work, our spirits too need spiritual food to be spiritually alive, spiritually healthy and get spiritual strength to do spiritual work.* What kind of spiritual food do we get? What kind of spiritual work do we do? *Explain to the younger children that we do not expect them to do much spiritual work yet, that is why they do not need the Holy Communion yet.*

If we eat physical food but do not do any physical work, where will that food go? *Eventually, down the toilet. I would imagine, therefore, that if we do not do any spiritual work after eating spiritual food, that spiritual food will go down a spiritual toilet and we really do not want that to happen to the Holy Communion that we eat, do we?*