

KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

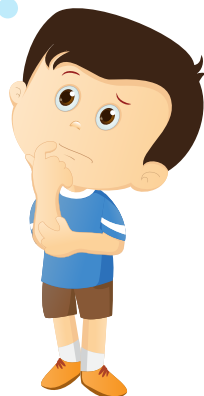


Do Lutherans honor and remember the saints?

Yes. Remembering and honoring the saints is very "Lutheran." God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions teach that remembering and honoring the saints is a great thing to do.

Why is it such a great thing to do?

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, which explains what Lutherans believe, teaches that we honor the saints for three reasons. ① Thanksgiving. When we honor the saints, we thank God for "showing (his people) examples of his mercy, revealing his will to save men, and giving teachers and other gifts to the church." ② Strengthening our faith. When we see how our Lord forgives the saints, we are "encouraged to believe that grace does abound more than sin." (Do you remember when Peter, one of the disciples, denied Jesus three times? Even the Apostles sinned and received forgiveness.) ③ "the imitation, first of their faith and then of their other virtues ..." We pray that God would keep us as strong in the faith as they were!



Parents: Explain to your children that we are not praying to the saints; we are simply honoring them on a special day in the Church Year. Remind them that, when we die, we will be with our Lord in heaven, which is where the saints are right now!

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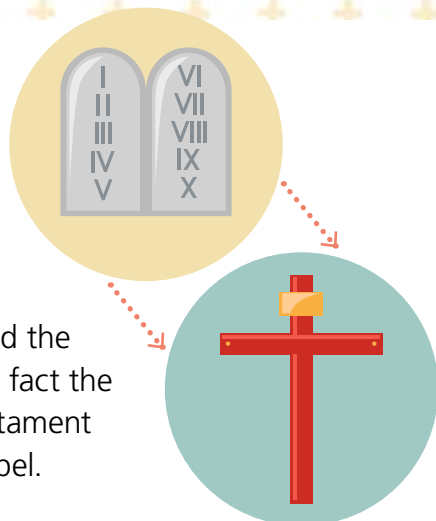
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Law and Gospel

Many people wrongly think that the Old Testament is the Law and the New Testament is the Gospel. In fact the Old Testament and the New Testament each contain both Law and Gospel.



What are the basics of the Law and the Gospel?

The Law teaches us God's will for how we live, namely the Ten Commandments. God's Law demands perfection, but it is impossible to be perfect. According to the Law, we are sinners, and are in big trouble with God. We need someone to save us. The Law shows us our sins.

The Gospel tells us what Jesus has done to save us from our sins. But the Gospel doesn't stop there. It tells us what Jesus continues to do for us because of His great love for us. The Gospel shows us our Savior, Jesus!

An easy way to remember all of this is to think of the following letters: S.O.S. The Law "shows our sins" while the Gospel "shows our Savior"!

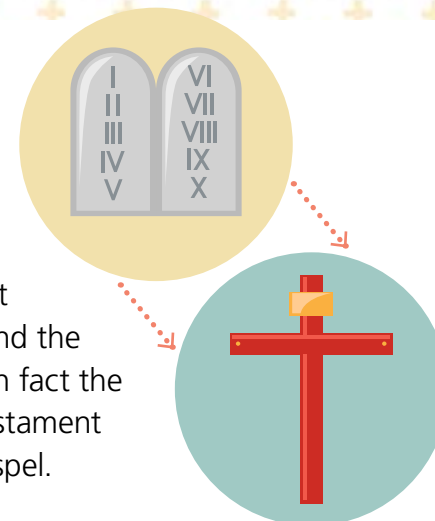


Parents: Distinguishing between Law and Gospel is a life-long venture of study. Perhaps you or your child can take notes during the sermon. Following the Divine Service, discuss these notes, identifying the Law and the Gospel in the sermon.

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What are “ceremonies”?

The word “ceremony” comes from the Latin word that means “ritual.” Ceremonies are the actions associated with the words we use in worship. For example, when the Pastor says “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” you may see people making the sign of the cross. Making the sign of the cross is a ceremony. Can you think of other ceremonies that occur during the Divine Service?

Why do we have ceremonies?

Ceremonies help to keep things reverent and in good order during worship, but **their main purpose is to teach the faith through sight, sound and action.** For example, when we make the sign of the cross, we are reminded of our Baptism. At your Baptism, you received the sign of the cross on your forehead and on your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified! Ceremonies also show what a congregation believes. You can learn a lot about a church by the ceremonies in their worship.



Parents: The Lutheran Confessions say: “The purpose of observing ceremonies is that men may learn the Scriptures,” and “the chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ.” If you have questions about the ceremonies of your church, ask your pastor. He will be happy to explain them!

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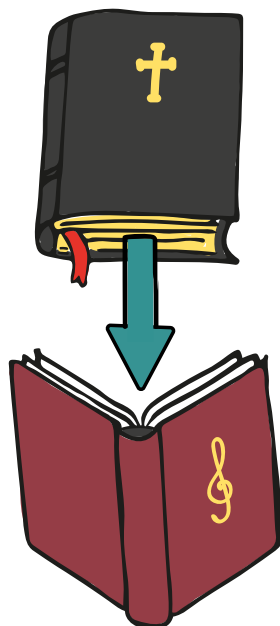
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What are “rites”?

No, “rites” are not the opposite of “wrongs,” though it might sound that way. In the church, rites are the words and texts of the Divine Services and Prayer Offices. **Almost all of the rites in our hymnal are straight from the Bible.**

Why do we use rites?

Rites make up a majority of our worship services. These rites are the written words of our God as they have been given to us in the Bible. In these rites we hear the voice of our Savior, Jesus, proclaiming with His own words His victory over sin, death and the power of the devil. He is giving to us the forgiveness of sins which He won for us when He died on the cross and rose again at Easter. There is nothing better than for Christ’s church to worship using such wonderful rites!



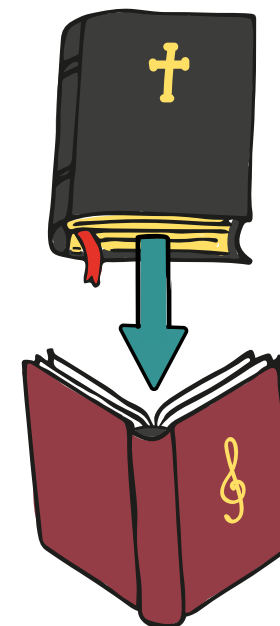
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Parents: Before or after the Divine Service, discuss the meaning of “rites” with your child. At home, choose portions of the Divine Service and study the purpose of the rites used. Encourage your children to recognize the importance of a worship life grounded in God’s Word and Sacraments, which the rites of our hymnal provide. Be sure to ask your pastor if you have any questions.



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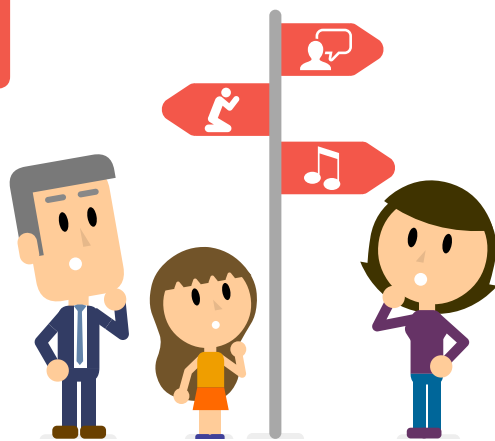


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What are “rubrics”?

A rubric (pronounced ROO-brik) is a direction for conducting a service. The word “rubric” comes from the Latin word rubrica which means “red

chalk.” Can you guess which words in our hymnal are the rubrics? If you guessed those words written in red, then you are right! They are red to make them look different from the words of the service.



Why do we use rubrics?

We all need directions so that we know what to do. **Rubrics offer direction to the pastor and the congregation during the service.** For example, the rubrics may tell us which page to turn to next. The rubrics may even tell us when to stand and when to sit. Rubrics help to keep everything in good order during the Divine Service. What wonderful tools the rubrics are!

Parents:

Take a few moments before or after worship to look at the different rubrics in the hymnal, then choose a few to discuss. Why are they so important? How might the directions which they give be helpful to us? How do they prepare us for the Divine Service?



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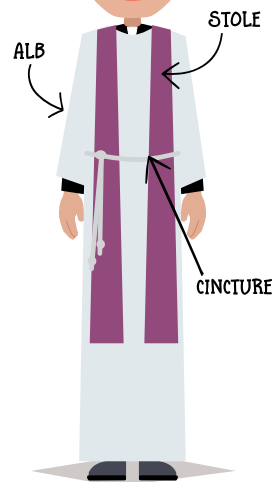
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What are “vestments”?

When you first see the pastor and his assistants in the Divine Service, what do you notice about them? They are wearing long robes and other unique garments. These are called “vestments.” The word “vestment” comes from the Latin word *vestimentum* which means “garment of office.” Vestments are garments worn by the pastor and the assistants during the Divine Service and other prayer offices.



Why are vestments used?

A person’s vestment tells us about who they are and their role during the Divine Service. If you have two or more pastors, one may be dressed in vestments that mark him as the presiding minister. The other pastors may be dressed in vestments that mark them as assisting ministers. Vestments help to keep the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments in good order. Did you know that God’s people have been using vestments since Old Testament times? Wow! Vestments are great tools in the church!



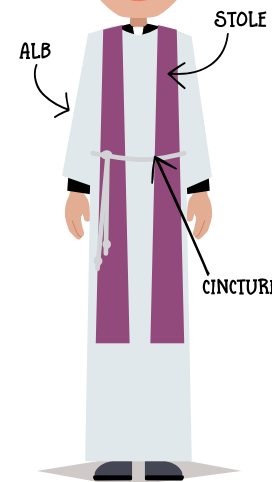
Parents: Before the Divine Service, direct your child’s attention to the pastor’s vestments. What color are they? How are they different from what you are wearing? Be sure to let your child approach the pastor after church to ask him questions about the vestments.



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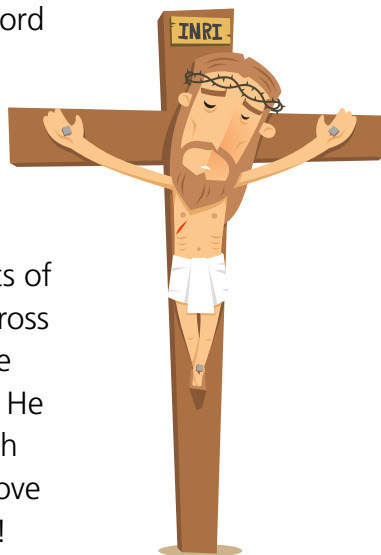
A great big word of love.

A word that you often hear used in the church is the word “redemption” (pronounced ree-DEMP-shun). All of the events in Jesus’ life work together to form God’s plan of redemption.

What does “redemption” mean?

The word “redemption” is a very important word used to describe what Jesus has done for us.

Redemption comes from the root word “redeem” which means “to buy back.” God’s plan of redemption was His plan to buy us back from sin, death and the power of the devil. This all happened when Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Law perfectly and died on the cross in our place. He paid the high price for sin, and He bought us back! But He didn’t stop there. He overcame death for us and rose from the dead to prove it! What a great Redeemer we have!



Parents:

What our God has done for us in Jesus reflects the Fatherly love He has for all people. As parents, we share this love with our children through the means our Lord has provided: Word and Sacrament. This is where we receive the real fruits of redemption.

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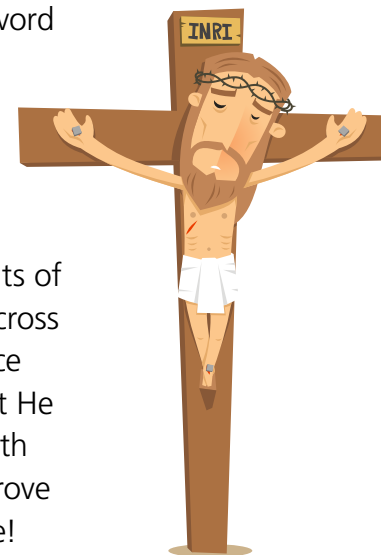
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Another great big word of love

In the Bible we hear the wonderful Good News of Jesus and all He has done for us. We hear about how He has saved us from our sins through His perfect life, death and resurrection. What you may not know is how the Holy Spirit fits into the picture. "Sanctification" (pronounced sank-ti-fi-KAY-shun) is the word used by the Church to describe this.



What does "sanctification" mean?

"Sanctification" comes from the root word "sanctify" which means "to make holy." The Holy Spirit sanctifies, or makes us holy, by giving us faith in Jesus and enabling us to do good works. All of this He does for us through the wonderful Gospel, and the Gospel can be found all wrapped up in the Word and Sacraments. Wow! The Holy Spirit is really at work in our lives!



Parents: Our Savior paid the price, and the Holy Spirit delivers the gifts! What a great combination and promise. Before or after the service, visit the baptismal font with your children and remind them that this is where the work of sanctification began. In Baptism we are washed clean and made holy before God!

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What is a “steward”?

A steward is someone who has been put in charge of something. For example, if you are a babysitter, you are a steward for the parents of the child you are watching. We have been entrusted as stewards, or keepers, of God’s creation. That means that He has given us everything we have, and out of love for Him, we use all things for His will. This includes giving of our time, talents, money and all that we have in service to Him.



Why do Christians give?

Like everyone else, we belong to God because He created us and sustains us. As Christians we belong to His kingdom of salvation through our Baptism. God’s love motivates us to give of what we have. We don’t give because we owe God for all He has done for us in Jesus. Instead, we give because of the powerful Gospel that is working within us! Wow! God really strengthens us for wonderful service!



Parents: Before or after the service, discuss stewardship with your children. Remind them why we give. Help them to discover how they might give of what they have. Encourage them to set aside a certain portion of their own money each week to give. They will experience the joy of giving first-hand.

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What is an “acolyte”?

The acolyte is the person (or persons) who lights the candles before the service. The word acolyte comes from the Greek word *akolouthos* which means “follower.” In English, the word acolyte sometimes means “attendant.”

Why do we use acolytes in the Church?

Acolytes have always been an important part of worship. For centuries, acolytes have attended to the service of God’s people by helping the pastor in many different ways. In our

churches today, acolytes primarily serve by lighting the candles. Acolytes wear robes and sit apart from the congregation because they are helping the pastor to serve God’s people during the service. Wow! What an important job!



Parents:

During the Divine Service, point out the acolyte to your children. If they are too young at the time, encourage them that one day they will get the opportunity to be an acolyte. Remind them that being an acolyte is a very important job for children to have in the church.



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What is a “catechism”?

A catechism (pronounced KAT-eh-kizm) is a book of instruction usually written in question and answer form. The word “catechism” comes from the Greek word *katekhein*, which means “to instruct.” A catechism teaches the basics of the Christian faith.

Why do we need catechisms?

While visiting local churches, Martin Luther found many pastors and their church members were unaware of the true teachings of the Bible. Because of this, the people were living immoral lives. Martin Luther wrote the catechisms to instruct people in the basics of the Christian faith, that they might know Christ and His forgiveness and live accordingly. We still use Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms so that we never forget those things that are necessary for faith in Christ.



Parents: Consider these words from Luther: “I, too, am a theologian who has attained a fairly good practical knowledge and experience of Holy Scriptures through various dangers. But I do not so glory in this gift as not to join my children daily in prayerfully reciting the Catechism. ... For God gave the Word that we should impress it on ourselves. ... Without this practice our souls become rusty, as it were, and we lose ourselves” (Plass, Ewald M., *What Luther Says* vol. 1 [St. Louis: Concordia, 1986], 125–26).



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What is a “Gospel Procession”?

You may sometimes see the Gospel reading take place in a different part of the church. On special Sundays, the Bible is carried into the center of the congregation where the pastor reads the Gospel to the people. There may also be some festive music or singing. After the reading, while the Bible is being carried back to its place, there may be more music and singing. This ceremony is called the Gospel Procession.

Why do we have a Gospel Procession?

Jesus is the living Word. He set us free from the burden of sin through His life, death and resurrection. A Gospel Procession reminds us that this wonderful news is to be carried into the whole world. Jesus came for all people and He offers eternal life to all who believe by the power of the Holy Spirit! Wow! A Gospel Procession is a wonderful thing!



Parents: Before or after the Divine Service, remind your children of the meaning of the Gospel Procession. When it is taking place, point out the reverent way the pastor, crucifer, and/or assistants move. Reverence and humility are shown to the One who is truly among us declaring the Good News of forgiveness of sins by His Word! Read John 1:1–3, 14 and discuss it with your children. How is Jesus described in this reading?

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What is the “church”?

When someone says the word “church,” we usually think of a place people go to worship. The Lutheran Confessions teach us that the church is the “assembly of all the believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” Wow! The church is so much more than a building!



If the church is more than just the building, then why is the building and everything in it so important?

The church building, or the “sanctuary,” is a place where God is present. We know that our Lord has promised to come to us in His Sacraments. Since God is actually here with us in His house, we should be very reverent, or respectful. We don’t want anything in the church pulling us away from what God gives us in His Word and Sacraments. Everything should direct our attention toward Him.



Parents: Before or after the service, direct your children to the wonderfully Gospel-rich symbolism found in the sanctuary, including the on the altar, windows and banners. Remind them that the Lord truly comes to us here in His Word and Sacraments. He brings us what we really need: the forgiveness of sins.

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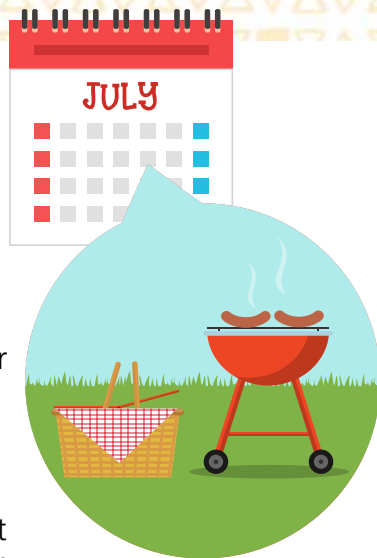
Parents: Before or after the service, direct your children to the wonderfully Gospel-rich symbolism found in the sanctuary, including the on the altar, windows and banners. Remind them that the Lord truly comes to us here in His Word and Sacraments. He brings us what we really need: the forgiveness of sins.



KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

What is the date today?

Usually when someone asks this question, you might look to a calendar for the answer. The date might help determine what to wear, where to go, and what you might do. For example, if the date were January 15, you might decide to wear warm winter clothes. If it were July 12, your family might have a picnic. Calendars help keep things in order.



What does this have to do with the Divine Service?

The Church's calendar determines much of what happens in worship each Sunday (like the colors in the Sanctuary, or the readings for the day). The Church has its own calendar and its own seasons. The Church's seasons are based on the different events in the life of Christ and His Church. Instead of Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring, the Church's calendar has Advent, Christmas, Lent and many more. This calendar helps put order to the seasons and festivals of the Church.

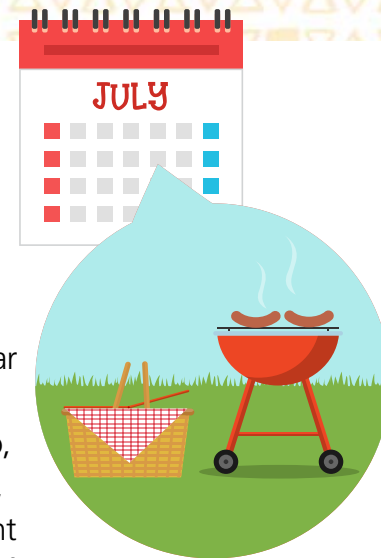


Parents: Before or after the service, direct your children to the front of the hymnal to find the liturgical calendar. Go through the calendar and discuss the different seasons. Remind them that many of the special dates we have on our everyday calendars come from the liturgical calendar, i.e. Christmas, Easter, etc.

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KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



What is the “Office of the Keys”?

When you hear this question, you might think that there is an office somewhere in the church building that holds a lot of keys. But this use of “office” means duty and obligation. For example, when someone is elected to Congress, they are elected to a public office with authority and certain duties. The Office of the Keys is an authority given by Christ to His Church with the duty to forgive repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Why is this authority called “keys”?

This authority given to the Church works just like a set of keys that locks and unlocks the gates of heaven. When forgiveness is withheld, the door of heaven is locked. When forgiveness is given, the door of heaven is opened and God’s forgiveness in Christ is poured out on the repentant person!



Parents: Trying to understand why the Church would withhold forgiveness may be difficult. Be sure to study John 20:22–23 and Matt. 18:18 with your child. Discuss what it means to be unrepentant as opposed to repentant. An unrepentant person is not sorry for their sins and does not believe in Jesus Christ. A repentant person is sorry for their sins out of love for God and believes in Jesus Christ for salvation!

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KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The explanation of the Small Catechism says, the Holy Spirit is “the third person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and Son.” This means that we believe in one true God, in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God just as the Father is God and the Son is God.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

The Holy Spirit sanctifies God’s people. In other words, He makes us holy by giving us saving faith in Jesus and the strength to lead godly lives in His name.

Why is the Holy Spirit so important?

We need the Holy Spirit and what He gives to us, because without Him, we are not able to believe in Jesus. In 1 Cor. 2:14 we hear the following: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” The Holy Spirit calls us to faith through the Gospel and delivers the gracious gifts of salvation in the Sacraments.

Parents:

During the service, tell your children to listen for times the Pastor says the name of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Invocation, Benediction). Remind your children that the Holy Spirit is exactly where God promised us He would be — in the Word and Sacraments. He comes to us by no other means than through these gracious gifts.



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KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

What are people doing on their knees?

During the Divine Service we do things that may seem a little weird. One of the things that we do during Confession and Absolution and at the Lord's Supper is something that you may not see anywhere else. You don't see it in a movie theater or the grocery store. Have you guessed what it is yet? Maybe you do it at home during family devotions or while you are saying your bedtime prayers. If you guessed "kneeling" then you are right!



Why do we kneel in the Divine Service?

Kneeling is a good way to show true humility in the Divine Service, because God is truly present. The King of Kings, Jesus Christ, comes to be with us. It is here that He gives us the good gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. Paul says, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9–11).



Parents: Encourage your children to watch for different times during the Divine Service when the congregation kneels. Practice kneeling during family devotions and during personal prayer time. Be a living example of this gesture of humility.

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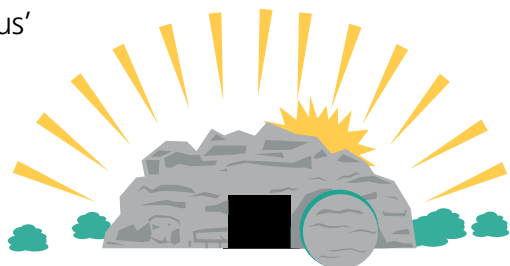
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KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Why do we worship on Sunday?

Do you remember on what day Jesus rose from the dead? On what day did Jesus appear to His disciples on the road to Emmaus? If you guessed Sunday, you are right! The Early Church gathered on Sunday because it directed our attention to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Many other miraculous events in the early Christian Church, such as Pentecost, happened on Sunday.



When did Christians begin gathering together for worship on Sundays?

We know from the Bible that during Paul's lifetime Christians met on Sunday to hear God's Word and celebrate Holy Communion (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Though Christians in different regions of the world sometimes worshipped on different days, by A.D. 325 most Christians worshipped on Sunday because they considered it "the Lord's Day." Wow, what a great tradition we share with our Christian ancestors!



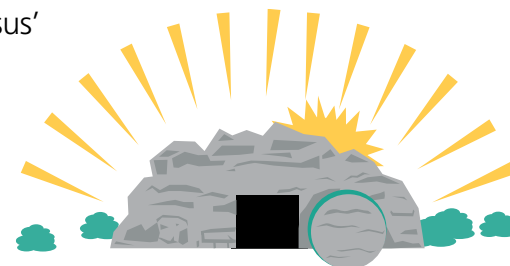
Parents: In the Early Church, Christians used different terms for their day of worship such as "First Day" or "Eighth Day." The label "the Lord's Day" stands out as the most significant title chosen by the Church. Direct your children to the significance in having a particular day set aside for receiving God's wonderful gifts through Word and Sacrament.



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