

Gestures: Something that we do with our bodies

Sign of the cross

The Direct Aim of this lesson is to help the child know what the sign of the cross is and how to do it. We also let the children know that this in itself is a prayer. When we do the sign of the cross we cover our whole body and ask God to protect and shield us.

When we present this to the children, we have them stand next to us, so that can see the correct movements, not a mirror image.

You can practice this with your child as they bless themselves upon entering and exiting the church utilizing the holy water fonts. Although this gesture is simple for adults, it can be quite tricky for a young child.

Bowing & Genuflection

The doctrinal point of this lesson is that God is infinitely greater than we are. It helps to develop a sense of humility and reverence toward God. We are great because God has created us and given us many gifts. When we show this lesson, we reflect on the greatness of God and the smallness of ourselves as we are bowing or genuflecting. We share with the children that they can bow at the Altar and genuflect at the Tabernacle.

Epiclesis

The epiclesis is a gesture done by the priest over the bread and the wine during the Eucharistic celebration. This gesture is a calling of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and the wine into Jesus Himself. The priest performs the gesture by starting with his hands up high and bringing them down over the bread and wine as he says the following words:

“And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them Holy by the power of the Holy Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You can encourage your child to listen for these words and to watch for the gesture during mass.

Offering

The offering is a gesture that is a sign of our response to the changing of bread and the wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, now Christ himself as offered to our Heavenly Father. The priest raises the body and blood of Christ while saying these words:

“Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours almighty Father, forever and ever. AMEN”.

You can encourage your child to listen for these words and to watch for the gesture during mass.

Peace

The Doctrinal Point is that we are all one united in Christ. His peace, which we need, we give to one another. We are passing the peace of Jesus to one another.

In the epiclesis, the priest’s hands start high then low. In the offering, the hands start low then high. In the Gesture of peace, the hands go side to side. All three gestures together form a cross.

The children can practice these gestures with the materials in the atrium