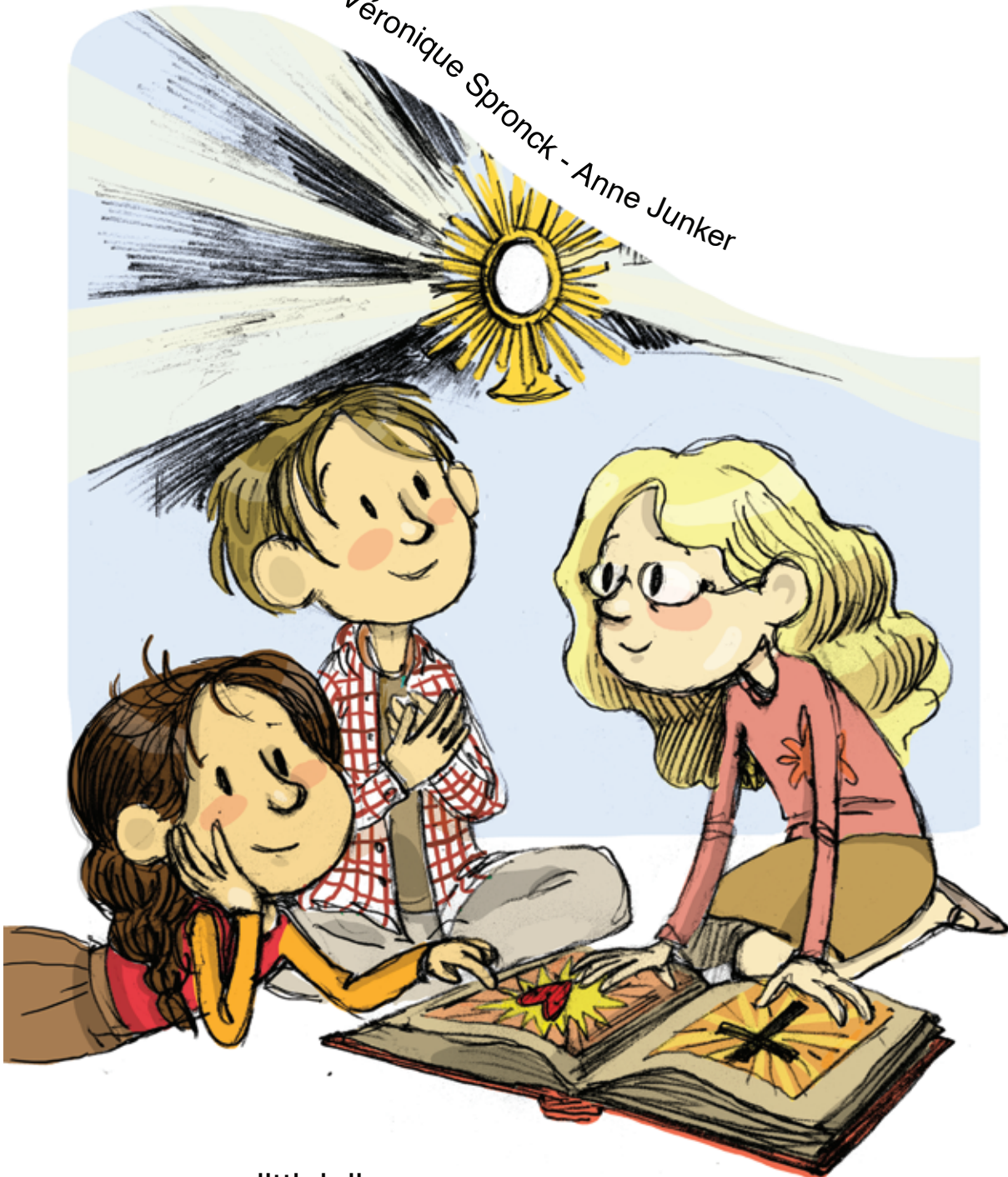


The small catechism

To teach children more about Jesus,
Bread of Life

Véronique Spronck - Anne Junker



Dear parents, catechists, religion teachers,
teachers and curious,

In the following pages, we offer a small catechism, focused on Jesus, the Bread of Life:
The Eucharist, Communion and the whole beauty of this mystery.

We would like to remind you that this little booklet is not exhaustive.

It does not gather everything a child needs to know before making his first communion, as it is merely a supplement of information that may be a welcome support for some of you. We propose to clarify some important points of the faith and of the Eucharist, in relation with Saint Juliana of Cornillon and her story. We therefore advise you to have the book "Little Juliana and the Bread of Life" to refer to it if necessary.

We invite you to use these following pages at the same time as you rely on a more comprehensive catechism. This way, you will best help the children to understand the whole beauty of Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Thank you



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(the * refer to the references in the book "Little Juliana and the Bread of Life")

On www.lapetitejulienne.be you will find many other printable games for children as well as many online games, activities and cartoons.

www.vienslevetoi.com: "Come and get up" is the mission for children of the Emmanuel Community. This website offers to let children from 4 to 11 years to grow in the knowledge of the person of Christ. It aims at accompanying them in their personal and spiritual growth.



What we need to know before receiving the Body of Christ

Bible verses

"I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn 11, 25-26)

For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. (Jn 6, 33-35)



In the Middle Ages, it is unusual to bring little children to Mass. However, the dearest wish of Juliana would be to attend Mass as often as possible. When the priest raises the Host, she feels an unusual presence in her heart. Even without understanding, she sometimes secretly attends the Eucharist. Juliana would like to know Jesus better and especially understand what lies behind this mystery of communion. She learns reading very early to dive into the Bible and learn more about her new friend. At that time, there were only few books: Juliana knows many writings of Saints by heart. She loves to stay as long as possible in prayer because it gives her a great joy and sweetness.

Juliana discovers Jesus by learning by heart His story in the Bible. She loves to recite His psalms like poetry. She closes her eyes to talk with Him with the bottom of her heart, to better listen to Him.

She is taught very early to distinguish right from wrong and to go to confession.

Some ideas

what you need to know before receiving the Body of Christ

(Attention: les * marquent les pages de référence dans le livre «la petite julienne et le Pain de vie»)

1 To desire it

To desire it is important. And we need to be aware that some children, even if they have a strong desire can express it in a very modest way: "I want to know Jesus better " or "I want to live the Mass fully". Therefore we need to be mindful to these little souls entrusted to us and to help them let grow their love and desire of Jesus in the Eucharist... Our own love can only be contagious!

*p.20

2 To know what is good and what is evil, learn to go to confession and live it

Since 1910 and the Pope Pius X, the recommended 'Age of discretion' to receive the sacraments of confession and of the Eucharist is seven years.

Indeed, it is considered essential that children can distinguish between good and evil. Of course children must be able to keep things apart at their very level, in their daily lives, in the actions that concern them and that are adapted to their age.

This ability to differentiate between good and evil is not sufficient in itself. It must be accompanied by a clear desire to better match what Jesus asks and so to will the good and the beautiful. This dual focus will naturally lead children to go to confession before their first communion.

It is therefore important to explain this wonderful process and prepare their hearts so that they may live Jesus' forgiveness in full conscience. This is a great time, beautiful and holy.

*p-18



Tips to let confession become more attractive

Often children (and grown up) are afraid of going to confession: fear of being judged, punished or simply fear of admitting shameful things.

But confession is a celebration! It is the reconciliation with oneself, with God and with the others. The sacrament of reconciliation is clearing one's heart, making it clean and beautiful to welcome Jesus with a new heart. This is comparable with the invitation of a friend to our home: We won't welcome him in an untidy house!

- Let's set up practical ways to underline this festive dimension. For example: joyful songs, little dances, little snack, congratulations, ...

- In the reconciliation, God opens a new path to the sinner: children can understand this through this "game": give children pebbles representing the sins in their heart. The children prepared for confession choose the number of pebbles. The priest 'gives' the pebbles to God and exchanges them against a lit candle: the light now illuminates the path of good.

- The priest may give them a flower that they offer to Jesus, to the Virgin Mary or to the person with whom they wish to reconcile.

3 I go to Sunday Mass

This is certainly the access criterion that is the most complex nowadays, regarding the decline of practice, especially among the younger generations. Whatever ... Let us be vigilant that children become familiar with the Eucharist and Sunday practice. Let us increase our inventiveness to introduce the course of the Mass and regularly invite children to live the parish Eucharist during this time of preparation.

* p-13

4 The body of Christ and the Host

The main criterion for children to be considered ready to receive the Eucharist (Are we ever ready to receive Christ!) is the belief in the Real Presence: do the children make the difference between the consecrated Host and the not consecrated one; do the children realize that there is a real change before and after the consecration. Warning: this criterion is not a matter of knowledge but of faith, the simple faith of children who know that it is Jesus that they will receive in their hands.

*p-14

Suggestion of DIY to do with your children

Do familiarize the children with the character of the little Juliana. This DIY will awaken their curiosity about the little Saint and about the First Communion.

All DIY can be downloaded under the small section of the website "little catechism" of www.littlejuliana.com

Jesus promises us to be always with us

Bible verses

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

1Cor. 11 : 23-26



One day, as Juliana is praying in the chapel, she sees a great light that illuminates her face. It looks like a huge full moon, round and shiny.

"Oh but... there is a piece missing! I do not understand"

Juliana finds it very strange and she is a bit afraid. Eventually she asks herself if Jesus is trying to tell her something through this. "I would like a feast held, in honour of My Presence in this Bread." "Oh, a feast? But why?"

"You pray often", whispers Jesus, "and you love me. However many forget I am present in the Bread and Wine. I am right by your side every day. I would like you to celebrate this once a year. This will be the feast of Corpus Christi" "The Bread of Life? Why are you telling me this?" asks Juliana.

"Juliana, I choose you to ask my friends and my Church to celebrate my presence in the world."

Some ideas

Jesus promises us to be always with us

1 I make my First Communion

Making ones First Communion means to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus for the first time. Concrete, it means consume the Host and Wine that have been consecrated during mass.

2 What is there in the Host and the Wine?

During the Mass at the moment of the consecration, the priest says some very important words. He repeats what Jesus told to his disciples during the Last Supper they had together: "This is my body given for you" and "This is my blood, given for you, do this in memory of me. "

When the priest says these words, the Holy Spirit descends upon the bread and wine. The bread then becomes the Body of Christ, and the wine becomes the Blood of Jesus. Of course, the appearance remains the one of bread and wine, but the substance is different. Each person who makes the First Communion believes that Jesus is present in the consecrated Host and Wine.

*p.21 & p.27

3 How does that happen?

Nobody is able to fully understand the mystery of the Eucharist, of God who makes himself present in the Bread and Wine. This is something that is beyond human comprehension. However, we can try to explain what it is to go to communion, it's beautiful !

4 What's the point?

→ Jesus knew he was going to die on the Cross: During the last Supper, He said to his disciples: "Do this in memory of me. Since then, the disciples and all the people of the Church have repeated the last acts of Jesus. Jesus loves us so much that He wanted to leave us something to be always alive near us. Through the Eucharist, He wants to be present for each of us and continue to give Himself, to give His infinite love to each of us.

→ The communion to the Body and the Blood of Christ nourishes our soul. The same way we food to not be hungry, the Bread of Life and the Wine are the spiritual food of our heart. We are strengthened and grown in Christ. *p-21

→ Through the Eucharist, Jesus comes to comfort us. He removes all the burdens we carry and relieves our pain. He wants us to get rid of what scares us and overburdens us. Instead of this, He wants us to fulfil us with His love. *p-14

→ Jesus wants us to be in Him as He is in us: When we go to communion, we welcome Christ in us, and we are also in Him. We are a one and same body, together with all the other communicants.

Thanks to the communion, we begin to look more and more like Christ, we become what we eat. Do you know the proverb, ' you are what you eat? ' ;-)

→ Jesus wants us to remember His story: He died on the Cross to redeem the sins of the world. He loved us so much that he gave his life. Through the Eucharist, we remember the sacrifice of Christ, who was so full of love for all men.

→ It is also a thanksgiving to Jesus for dying on the Cross to redeem our sins. To love Him as much as He loves us is not possible, but we must still try by thanking Him all ways. The action of grace/Thanksgiving comes now.

5 How shall we receive the Holy Communion ?

It is essential that children become aware of the importance of the gift we receive and receives the Holy Communion with respect. We therefore need to monitor the practical aspects! Make sure that nobody has his hands in the pockets or a chewing gum in mouth. Why not train children with unconsecrated hosts to show them how to behave and how to proceed? Some children express a desire to kiss the Host before their age of communion.

Could this be a way to let your children understand the Real Presence?



6

What is thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving is the time of mass at which each one, after receiving the Holy Communion, thanks God in silent prayer.

We therefore need to introduce children to practice this prayer of thanksgiving. So that they can gather their thoughts and prayers and simply say thank you for the gift they received. Thank you to Jesus for coming to join them in their heart.

Small prayer before the tabernacle

Jesus, you are really in me thanks to this Host that I have consumed. You are there, you live in me ... What a gift, what chance to become like You, to look like You, to act as a Christian and as a friend of God !

But You are also hidden in your home ... It is this pretty tabernacle in which You are resting. A candle glows to indicate that you are here. I bow before your house, because I know that inside, you are looking at me.

7

And after the First Communion?

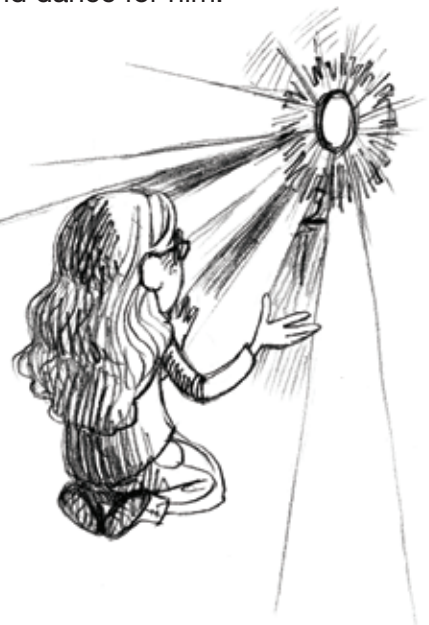
It is necessary that the children continues to live their faith in continuing to receive the Holy Communion regularly. There is no communion for once and then never go to church. Communion is like visiting a friend. It is absurd to visit him once and then abandon him! You have to go and find him, visit him and continue to act as a friend. When you're friends: we see each other , we talk to each other, we eat together , we want to talk about our friend to everyone , laugh with him. We can even sing and dance for him!

8

What is adoration?

The process of adoration can only be done if the hearts of the children understand that Jesus is truly present in the Host. Therefore, they can give Him thanks, praise Him or maintain a dialogue, a prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

In front of the Real Presence, children may just make an act of presence and be covered by the love of God who looks at them in the Bread of Life. Some say so poetically that we operate like a battery that is recharged by solar energy. Here is the look of God that recharges our batteries of love !



9

What is Corpus Christi?

It is a feast that celebrates the Presence of Jesus in the world under the guise of his Body and his Blood, His Real Presence in the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist. It is also called " Feast of the Blessed Sacrament." It is celebrated on the Thursday or Sunday after the Feast of the Trinity, usually in June, when the light is at its brightest. It is thanks to Juliana that this feat was instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264 .

Suggestion of DIY to do with your children

The Sacred Heart of Jesus: With this DIY, children can see that their heart is filled with the love of God, like a bright fire that sets everything ablaze. They can write a word on the burning heart, for example: "Jesus, I love you."

I go to church: With this DIY, children are educated to go to church and understand what/who lies in the Host and in the tabernacle. They may realize that the church is not just a mere empty building, but it is the house of God.

All DIY can be downloaded under the small section of the website "little catechism" of www.littlejuliana.com



Jesus is your best friend. How can you be happy with Him?

Bible verses

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world.

A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

(Mt 5, 13-16)



"How do I become someone's friend?" asks the little girl. Sapience smiles: "It is simple: by talking to him,... by listening, by making him happy ... Then friends learn about each other, and comfort one another. What about you Juliana? Are you looking for a friend?"

"No, I already found one!" answers Juliana.

Jesus and Juliana quickly become best friends. Juliana loves to do Jesus small services, to talk to Him and learn more about Him by reading the Bible. She considers Him as a model and tries to imitate Him.

Very young, Julienne understands that Jesus is happy when she's nice to others. She often insists on doing the tasks of the farm that are the less considered: For example, she wants to milk the cows even if she is afraid. This way, the others are happy not to have to do the work!

Some ideas

Jesus is your best friend. How can you be happy with him ?

1 What is a friend?

*p.15, 16,17,18

A friend is someone you love above all and you can count on. Watch out this is always two-way: A friend also loves you and knows he can always count on you.

2 How to be the friend of someone? How to be a friend of Jesus?

When we have a friend, we love him so much that we would do everything to make him happy. Seeing him happy also makes us happy. Now, what can we do to make our friend happy? Let's be full of imagination to make him happy!



3

What makes Jesus, our new friend happy?

If we put into practice what Jesus gave and taught us, it makes Him happy. The aim of participating in the Eucharist is to absorb the love of Christ to shine and illuminate the world with all the love that is overflowing our heart! That is to be the light of the world. Jesus gives us two gifts here: the Holy Communion with his Body and his Blood and all its valuable lessons. He invites us to live according to the example He gave us. To love without distinction every person around us and help the others. Just like salt gives flavour to our food, let us be the flavour of the existence of others. The matter is to make everyone happy thanks to the faith we have .

But there are other ways to please Jesus

We refer here to the famous book of **Gary Chapman**: The 5 Languages of Love. This book provides some keys to love others in all possible ways. So here we have 5 ways to love our friend Jesus, 5 tricks we can give to the children to help them to love others: Parents, Grandparents, family, friends and strangers.

Compliments: A compliment is above all thanking the person for what she is and what she does in our lives. Many Christian hymns, prayers and psalms praise the Lord for all his benefits! But a spontaneous compliment a child will always be a thousand times more pleasant to Jesus.

Services: The service is a little denial that we choose to make to give it to God. It is a small act of love. We are not obliged to do it, but we do it out of love.

Moments of quality : spend time in adoration, in prayer. The matter is to spend time in the Presence of Jesus.

Gifts : Children are generally very clever to make spontaneous and free gifts, with a very touching simplicity. A bouquet of flowers, a drawing, crafts, are as many proves of love that are a pleasure to God.

Physical contact : Here comes the Holy Communion where we touch and eat the Body of Jesus and become one with Him.

Suggestion of DIY to do with your children

draw and write for Jesus: Through this DIY, children can have a dialogue with Jesus, tell Him how they feel: joy, sorrow, doubt. A small concrete DIY to learn how to pray.

All DIY can be downloaded under the small section of the website "little catechism" of www.littlejuliana.com



Other suggested activities:

About the ' salt of the earth ' and ' light of the world:

baking a bread without salt and a bread with salt. Children realize how bad and bland the bread without salt is, while the salty bread tastes much better. They can understand the comparison with their Christian life. To give even more sense, you can make a heart -shaped bread!

Similarly, you can blindfold the children to realize how difficult it is to move in the dark. Then you explain them that they can spread the light of Jesus and remove the darkness in our hearts!

About services:

Provide the children with a drawing of a tree without leaves. When they do good, the children can stick a coloured dot on the tree or draw a leaf. After a few weeks, the tree will have regained all its leaves and becomes beautiful! (Lent is usually a time for this kind of project)



The end!

Thank you for using our small catechism!

If you wish to contact us and suggest ideas for activities and DIY, you can do it via our contact form on www.littlejuliana.com