



Holy Family Parish
Religious Instruction - Grades K-5
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Lesson 1 - Church Etiquette and Genuflection

- The church is a sacred building designed to lift our hearts and minds to God.
- The church is the house of God, because it is a place dedicated to Him.
- God also dwells here in the Most Blessed Sacrament.
- This means that we should act properly when in the church.
- When we enter the church we realize that we are in a special sacred place. The architecture (shape and appearance) tell us so. It speaks of prayerfulness and silence.

Think about it: Every place we go has certain rules that tell us how we can act. When you enter a library, you are asked not speak louder than a whisper because people are trying to read. In a courtroom you cannot talk at all or you will be asked to leave. However, on a playground, on the beach or in your swimming pool you can yell and scream as much as you like.

Sadly, some of the adults like to talk in church. Don't ever become like them. They have forgotten what they were taught as children. If someone tries to talk to you in the church other than a teacher or your parents, you can ignore them or ask to speak to them outside.

How should we act when we enter a Church?

It's simple: There is to be no talking. We talk to God. Talking to God is what we call prayer. We gesture and respond to God and the priest, but we don't carry on conversations with our neighbor in the pews. There is a time and place for social interaction, but church isn't the place. Before and after Mass people like to pray. We shouldn't disturb them with our personal conversations. There are special areas in the church called the vestibule or narthex where conversations can take place quietly.

Genuflection

Genu = knee, flection = means to flex or bend.

Genuflection is a sign of respect and honor.

Movies sometimes show a prince genuflecting before a king.

A man will ask a woman to marry him down on bended knee.

If we genuflect for people, then we should definitely genuflect before God.

When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, you should get on two knees.

Genuflecting shows God that we respect Him. Sometimes people can't because of knee problems. They are allowed to bow at the hip to show their respect as best they can. Sadly, some people don't bother to acknowledge God at all. They walk into church and plop down without recognizing that their king and creator is present.

Practice

Genuflect on your right knee. It should touch the floor.

Lesson 1: Take-home Quiz

1. When do you genuflect?
 - a. Upon entering the church
 - b. Upon leaving the church
 - c. When you go to the bathroom
 - d. All of the above

2. Can you find the tabernacle(s)?

3. How many are tabernacles are there?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4

4. Which one is where God dwells? How do we know?

5. What is prayer?
 - a. Thinking about what you're having for dinner
 - b. Speaking and listening to God
 - c. Talking to the person behind you
 - d. Listening to Fr. Slezak

6. What does the word gesture mean?

7. What is a vestibule (also called a narthex)?
 - a. A place to kneel
 - b. A suitcase
 - c. The area between the outside and the inside of the church
 - d. A place to scream and carry on

8. What does the word sacred mean?
 - a. Scary
 - b. Set apart and dedicated for worship
 - c. Ugly
 - d. Pretty

9. True or False. It is perfectly fine to talk in church.

10. If you can't genuflect what should you do?
 - a. Plop in the pew
 - b. Wave to God
 - c. Bow
 - d. Strike up a conversation with your neighbor.