

131 FUN-damental Facts for Catholic Kids

**Liturgy, Litanies,
Rituals, Rosaries,
Symbols, Sacraments,
and Sacred Surprises**

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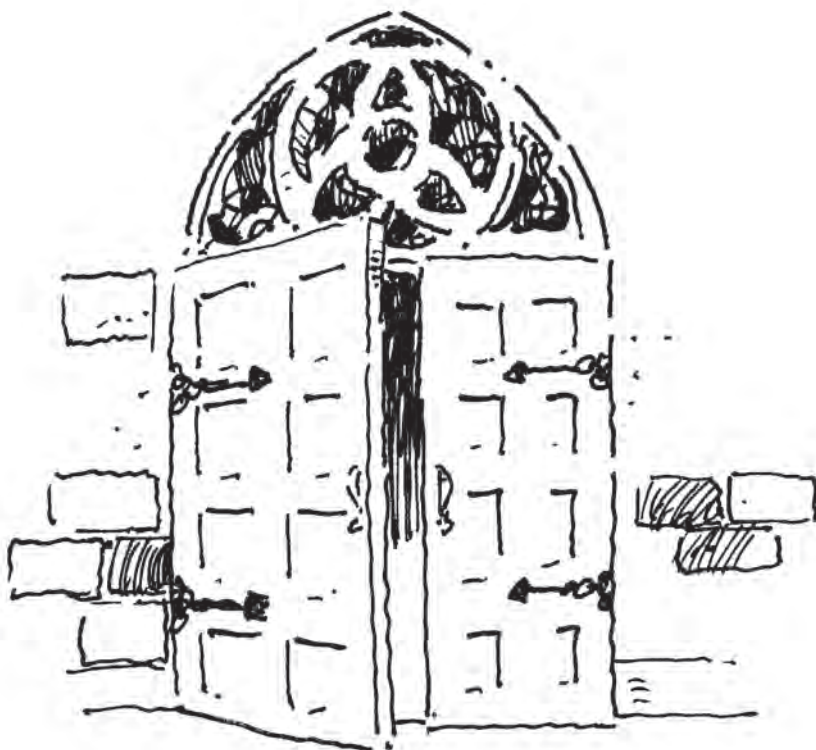
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**Did you ever take a tour on a class field trip?
Did you ever visit a factory or a museum or a pumpkin
patch? What about a tour of a Catholic church?**

Now at first, you might think that sounds boring—just like you MIGHT think seeing a new movie or taking a karate class or going to the Grand Canyon sounds boring UNTIL you see, take or go!

Anything can SOUND boring until you LEARN ABOUT it. In this book, we'll "tour" the church inside and outside. So come along on this adventure and the church you thought was boring might surprise you!



Have you ever noticed that houses come in all “flavors” and colors—tall, small, red brick, gray stone, fancy, or plain. What about churches?

When you ride around town, see how many KINDS of houses AND churches you can count.

Then think about the way houses and churches are a lot alike! They are both places where babies, grandmas, teenagers, and ALL kinds of people can gather together. That’s why a Church is not just the building. The people who come together to pray as the family of God can turn a building into a Church just the way a family turns a house into a home. And since you are a “child of God,” a member of God’s family, you are an important part of the “Church.” Did you know that?

If you could build a house, what would it look like? If you could build a church, what would it look like?

What would the people who ARE the Church look like? And how would they act when they are at church OR when they are at home?





There are lots of things to see and learn about the Catholic church, but what does *catholic* mean?

The word *catholic* means “universal” or “all over the world,” and there are Catholic churches all over the world. Catholic is also used to describe the members, churches, schools, laws, and clergy (priests, bishops, and so on) who follow the same teachings that Jesus gave to his apostles when he was on earth.

If you have been baptized in the Catholic church, you are called a Catholic and that’s why you might like to learn all this “stuff” about YOUR church!

Did you ever dip your toe into the water of a swimming pool, lake, or river? Did you ever dip your fingers into water at church?

When you go into the door of a Catholic church you will probably see something called a **holy water font**. It may or may not look like a “fountain.” It may be a large container of water on a pedestal in the middle of the floor OR a small container attached to the wall.



People dip their fingers into the water and make the Sign of the Cross. The water is not called “holy” because it’s magic or anything like that, but because a priest has prayed over it and blessed it. This is to remind you that you were once baptized with water and became a Christian—and you should act reverent like a Christian while you’re in church.

Did you ever dip your fingers into the holy water font at a church? Did it ever make you think about how you were once baptized with water?

If your family has a picture of the day you were baptized, ask them to show it to you. When you look at it, you might see the people who were there for your baptism—people who all love you. And every time you dip your finger into holy water, you can remember that God loves you because you are a part of HIS family.

Do you know how to make the Sign of the Cross— with or without holy water?

To make the **Sign of the Cross**, as a reminder of Jesus dying on the cross, you simply touch your fingers to your forehead, then to your chest, then to your left shoulder, then to your right shoulder. As you do this, you quietly say or think, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

You will notice that during Mass, the priest—and the people—often make the Sign of the Cross. There are lots of other times when you could make this sign. Do you know when those times are?

Well, you can make it before you start to say a prayer in class or in a group—and at the end of the prayer. You can make it when you receive the Eucharist or at the end of Mass when you receive the priest’s blessing or just anytime you want to say hello to God.

You can even do it secretly by quietly using your thumb to make a cross sign on your forehead or your chest or even in the palm of your hand (this can be called your **palm prayer!**). Can you think of some times you might want to make a secret cross sign to ask God to help you—like maybe when you’re afraid of something or want to say thanks for something or are just too tired to say a long prayer?

