

Good Morning! My name is Allie Rial. I am an eighth grader at Prince of Peace Catholic School. Throughout my years at Prince of Peace I have grown up learning about the Eucharist and why it's so important to the Church. In my opinion, it's the most direct connection we have to Jesus. It reminds us of the sacrifice and hardships that he went through to give us what we have today. It has, and continues to, guide me through my life as I grow up in the Church.

Second grade was the most significant time in learning about the Eucharist. First Communion took place that year, so the Eucharist's importance and significance was emphasized for most of the year. We are continuing to learn about it going into Confirmation in the fall. The Eucharist is the thing that unites us all. To me, it represents the fact that we all have Jesus inside us. It helps us to follow Jesus' golden rule: to treat everyone as we want to be treated. One of my favorite songs that we sang in Church was "This Little Light of Mine." To follow the golden rule, we need to let the light of Jesus within us shine.

First Communion was a huge deal to me. It was the first time I felt that I was truly contributing to the Mass. It was harder to fully appreciate it as a second grader, however. But now, as an eighth grader, that understanding and appreciation has significantly increased. The importance of it in my life has definitely increased. I consider myself an optimistic person and I always try to put out my best example for others. I try to help with whatever I can, whenever I can. The way I treat others has been important to me because I want to make others feel good about who they are. At school, our religion class has been dedicated to teaching and preparing us for Confirmation. Recently we took a test on the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The Gifts are wisdom, knowledge, understanding, fortitude, counsel, fear of the Lord, and piety. The Fruits are kindness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, peace, joy, love, goodness, modesty, chastity, patience, and self-control. These, to me, represent examples of what we should be putting out to others no matter who they are. Jesus

inside of us and our conscience work together to help us to show these things towards others.

Being an example is part of my everyday life. I have two younger siblings, Meredith, who is in fifth grade, and Augie, who is in Kindergarten. Also, as eighth graders at Prince of Peace, we have first grade buddies. We accompany our buddies to Mass on Mondays during the school week. It is important that even though they don't fully understand the importance of this sacrament yet, we teach them the reverence and respect that should be shown during that time of consecration. When we attend 7:30 mass on Sundays, I know that my brother doesn't appreciate Communion yet, especially since he can't fully participate. But even though these younger people don't have the same level of appreciation that others may have, it is important that we teach them what we can about it. I take what I learn about the Eucharist in our religion class and put it into effect during Mass. Not long ago, the eighth graders did the Stations of the Cross. We wrote the prayers and modern-day applications on the hopes that it would connect to the students from our school. Adoration is another opportunity that we have available to honor the Eucharist and recognize its importance.

High school is a big change for me that's coming up in the near future. But with Jesus inside of me, I know I can handle anything that will challenge me, or push me out of my comfort zone. It will be different going from a Catholic School to a public school, but it doesn't change everything. The fact that everyone will come from a different school, background, and like different things is guaranteed. It will be a new place and a new start for me, both as a student and as a follower of Jesus. The way I act towards others in this new school will set me apart from the rest of the school community. The fact that I carry Jesus with me always will be the source of encouragement I need in any situation and it will help me to choose the right thing to do.

One of the great things about Prince of Peace is all the opportunities for the youth. This summer, I will be participating in Catholic Heart Work Camp and impacting others' lives. Going on this trip will help me to see the Eucharist's power in action. We will be helping those in need by assisting the less fortunate families and individuals in Nashville, Tennessee. At first, I wasn't sure that this trip would be something for me. But the opportunity that it provides for me at thirteen was intriguing. I can help someone in a huge way at only thirteen. The more considering I did, the more convinced I became to go on this trip and improve someone's situation for the better.

The Eucharist will continue to teach me and connect me to Jesus and the Church. It will show me the right path and lead me according to the plan God has for me. During these next few years, I hope to keep finding these opportunities and recognize the importance of the Eucharist in my life. I hope that my words this morning have helped you to recognize the importance of the Eucharist in your life and how it can guide you to see God's plan for you. Thank you and God bless you.