



Look Around My Church

Your church is filled with special sights to see.
Do you know the names of these things you see in the sanctuary?

- 1 Through the blessed water in the **baptismal font**, we become members of Jesus' Church. When you walk by the baptismal font in a church, dip your hand into the water and make the Sign of the Cross.
- 2 The flame of the **Easter candle**, also called the **Paschal candle**, is next to the baptismal font because it represents Jesus, the Light of the World. When we are baptized, we are filled with the bright light of Jesus. Do you see a cross on the candle? If you look very closely, you will see five red grains of incense. They help us remember the five wounds of Jesus on the Cross. Look for the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet: **Α** and **Ω** Jesus is first and last, the beginning and the end.
- 3 The benches in church are called **pews**. During Mass we use the pews to help us stand, sit and kneel as we join together to praise God in prayer and song.
- 4 The special space set apart for the altar is called the **sanctuary**. Sometimes this area is raised up like a stage so we can see what is happening from our pews.
- 5 The **ambo, lectern** or **pulpit** is the special place where ministers read, speak and sometimes sing during the Liturgy of the Word. We hear stories from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Gospel. We also listen to a special talk given by a priest or deacon called a homily.
- 6 The **altar** is the table on which ordinary bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. The priest **consecrates** these gifts with the same words Jesus spoke during the Last Supper: "**This is my body.**" "**This is my blood.**"
- 7 The **tabernacle** is the sacred place where the Body of Christ remains present. We genuflect before the tabernacle each time we come into a church. This shows our respect for the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. A chalice called a **ciborium** is found inside the tabernacle. Watch for the priest or deacon to go to the tabernacle before Communion to get a ciborium.
- 8 The **sanctuary lamp** burns brightly to remind us of Jesus' Eucharistic presence in the tabernacle.
- 9 A **crucifix** hangs over the altar to remind us how much Jesus loves us. He suffered, died and rose again to save us from our sins and give us eternal life in heaven. Remember to say thank you each time you look at the crucifix.
- 10 Many churches have **stained glass windows**. These beautiful decorations are made from small colored pieces of glass. Some windows tell us stories from the Bible.
- 11 Look carefully in the sanctuary for a **credence table**, the place where the **chalice**, for the wine that becomes Jesus' Precious Blood, and the **paten** to hold the bread that becomes Jesus' Body are found.
- 12 Just like the people, the priest and other ministers need a place to sit and listen to the Word of God and to pray. The large **chair** is for the presiding priest and the others are for deacons and altar servers.
- 13 The **organ** is sometimes called the King of Instruments. It has a very special job to do during the celebration of the Eucharist. When the musician plays, it helps us sing praise to God. The beautiful singing of the **choir** and **cantor** also help lead our singing.
- 14 The **sacristy** is a room that stores the sacred vessels we use for Mass including the vestments worn by the priest and other ministers, chalices, and sacred books.
- 15 The **statues** of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the saints give honor to these holy men and women. Do you have some special statues in your church? Do you know whom they represent?
- 16 Often, **votive candles** are found near the statues. Many people like to light a candle when they want to ask God for a special favor.
- 17 The **Reconciliation room** is a quiet place where we have the opportunity to receive this important Sacrament of Forgiveness.