

Q

*How do you explain “Real Presence” to children?*

A

The first Communion class is filled with excitement to the point of bursting! They are just awestruck by every new thing they learn about Jesus. Their enthusiasm is contagious as they rattle off the names of the things in church, the vessels and vestments used at Mass and the names of their pastors and priests. Of course, they know Christ can do anything because he’s God. He comes to us in holy Communion because he loves us so much that he wants to be with us. And he comes to us in the form of bread and wine. We really receive him in the Eucharist.

Sometimes it is easier to explain to children than to adults. Their faith and trust in Jesus is not limited by the questions and doubts that often come with the question of how he does it. Rather they focus on the question why, and the answer is something they can easily grasp: love. Christ wants to be with us because he loves us. Nothing is purer in truth or in faith. Not even the theological explanation of transubstantiation, or philosophical reasoning or symbolic references come close. Christ takes on the form of bread and wine to be simple and approachable, so that no one is afraid or turned away. His love for us is complete and total. We try to love him the same way in return. For a child it is simple; for us adults, we keep trying. “Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3).