

9 Practical Tips to Help You Stay Focused at Mass

Let's face it, keeping distractions at bay during Mass is a difficult task for just about everyone. We're human. We live in a fast-paced world. We have so many things bouncing around in our minds that we bring into Mass, not including the distractions we're bombarded with after we find our seat in the pew. And if we have little ones—multiply that by ten.

It takes an almost heroic effort to prevent our minds from wandering away from the most important thing happening in our world in that moment—Jesus Christ coming to us in the flesh. But, even so, it is possible to limit at least some of our distractions at Mass with a little preparation. Check out these simple yet practical tips:

1. Turn off the car radio on the way to Mass.

One of the best ways to mentally prepare for Mass is to begin before you arrive. Start clearing out your distractions in advance by spending your drive time to the parish in silence. Turn off the car radio, shut off your phone, and quiet down the talking if you have others in the car with you. Leave any important conversations for after Mass. Consciously start making your transition from secular to sacred. Let that silence sink in.

2. Get to Mass at least ten minutes early.

By clearing out your mind on the way to Mass and making room for silence, you have already taken steps to prepare yourself for prayer. Use that preparation well by spending at least a few minutes in quiet prayer before Mass begins. Bring to mind that you are now in the presence of God and that you are about to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and thank Him for this gift of grace. This will help to settle you down and keep you attentive. More time is better, but a few minutes are better than none at all. This may take practice, but over time you can develop the habit.

3. Sit close to the front.

Another good reason to get to Mass a bit early is to get an empty seat in one of the front pews. If all that is in front of you is the altar, it is much easier to stay focused on what is happening there. You will also be less distracted by what is happening in the pews around you.

4. Keep your hands folded in prayer.

Posture is important to prayer. Let your body remind you of what your heart and mind should be doing by keeping your hands reverently folded. There is a reason why we teach this to kids! Try it, and you'll probably find that it helps lessen your distractions.

5. Fully Participate in the Mass.

Mass is not an event for spectators. Participate! Say all the prayers and sing all the songs. If it helps, follow along with each part of the Mass using a [Roman Missal](#). Where does this Sunday fall in the liturgical calendar? How is the Old Testament reading connected to the New Testament reading? How does the Responsorial Psalm connect both? If you are engaging in all of this, it is a rewarding occupation for the mind, and God will undoubtedly assist you to better grasp and understand His sacred truths.

6. Bring back those wandering thoughts.

Mass is the place where heaven meets earth. Each time you are distracted, always bring your mind back to where you are, even if you have to do this 100 times from start to finish. As instructed by [St. Francis de Sales](#):

"If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it again in Our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed."

7. Intentionally add your intentions and sacrifices to the prayers of the Mass.

Two things that you can bring with you to every Mass are the special intentions that you're praying for, and the personal sacrifices that you're uniting to Christ's one great sacrifice. Both come together as you "offer it up" at Mass. At the point before the Consecration when the priest says, "Pray brethren, that my sacrifice AND YOURS may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father," consciously think of what these things are for you.

8. Memorize the Anima Christi Prayer

The [Anima Christi](#) is a beautiful Communion prayer dating to the middle ages. Pray these words very slowly as a meditation to keep your mind focused on what Christ is doing in your soul at your reception of every Holy Communion. Do this enough times and you'll soon have it memorized.

9. Ask for help.

If you want help keeping the distractions away during Mass, just ask! Your Guardian Angel exists to help you with things like this. Simply and humbly ask your guardian angel, who is adoring Christ in the eternal Mass along with you, to assist you in praying well and staying attentive.

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