

# 9 Communion and Children



# Communion and Children



“When you eat the bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”  
(I Corinthians 11:26 NIV)

We celebrate the Lord’s Supper in order to remember Christ’s death on the cross, thank God for His grace and love shown in Jesus Christ, and represent Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf.

Communion, or The Lord’s Supper, is one of two sacraments that our tradition practices. A sacrament is a visible sign of our faith in Jesus Christ; it was instituted by Jesus and is a unique means of God’s grace.

Children are welcome to participate in communion within our tradition, however, they should be old enough to have a clear understanding of what communion represents, why it is important, and be able to testify to their belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

A child’s first communion is a special moment in their spiritual formation and an opportunity to create a faith memory. In order to make it more meaningful and to guarantee a child’s full understanding, the following is an outline of a suggested conversation prior to a child’s first communion. We recommend using this in an informal, small group setting following the general teaching on communion and the sacraments. For teaching lessons on those subjects, consult *Building Faith Kids Growing Like Jesus* material, lesson 38 and *Building Faith Kids Knowing God’s Truth* material, lessons 40 and 42.

## Suggested Settings:

- Small group, family class: present material informally to children and parents then serve communion to the families.
- Small group, class setting: present material to small group of children prior to adult communion in which they will participate.
- Large group, children's church: present material using additional *Building Faith Kids Growing Like Jesus* and *Knowing God's Truth* lesson material. Follow the lesson by serving corporate communion.

## COMMUNION CLASS TEACHING:

(leader's notes)

### 1. Communion in the Bible

- Jesus' Example:

The night before Jesus was crucified; he had a special last meal with his disciples. During the meal, Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it. He passed it around to the disciples and told them to eat it saying: "Take this and eat it. This is my body." (Matthew 26:26 NIV). Jesus did not mean it was literally his body, but that the bread represented his body that was soon going to be broken on the cross when he would die for their sins.

Jesus then took a cup of juice and passed it around. He told his disciples to drink it and said - "All of you drink from it. This is my blood of the new covenant. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many." (Matthew 26:27-28 NIV). Again, Jesus didn't literally mean the juice was his blood, but it represented his blood that would be shed on the cross to forgive all of our sins.

- Early Church's Example:

The Christians in the early church often shared a common meal together when they met for worship.

In I Corinthians 11:26, Paul gives instruction to the early church and encourages them to observe communion when he says - "When you eat the bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." (NirV)

2. Communion is a Sacrament:

- Sacred moments to honor and remember what God has done
- An outward expression or symbol of an inward event (showing on the outside something that happened on the inside...in our hearts and minds)
- God offers a special blessing or gift during the sacraments – His grace  
"We have all received one blessing after another. God's grace is not limited."  
(John 1:16 NirV)

3. Why communion:

- We celebrate the Lord's Supper or communion to remember Christ's death on the cross
- We celebrate the Lord's Supper to thank God for His grace and love shown to us in Jesus Christ.
- Communion represents Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

"Then Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to them and said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. It is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19-20 NirV).

"When we give thanks for the cup at the Lord's Supper, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ?"

Just as there is one loaf, so we who are many are one body. We all eat from the one loaf." (I Corinthians 10:16-17 NIV)

4. How do we participate in communion?

- By coming prayerfully and thoughtfully
- By preparing ourselves to receive the bread and juice (elements)
  - ❑ Prepare your heart by seeking to see if there is any sin that needs to be forgiven
  - ❑ Prepare your mind by focusing on what Jesus Christ did for you and how much God loves you
  - ❑ Prepare your attitude by being humble and faithful
- By receiving with reverence and thanks

5. Are You Ready?

Have each child respond to the following questions:

- Do you believe that:
  - ❑ God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby?
  - ❑ Jesus grew up and taught people about God's love?
  - ❑ Jesus, who had never sinned, died on a cross to take the punishment for your sins because He loves you?
  - ❑ Jesus rose from the dead and walked on earth again, then went back to Heaven where he is building a place just for you?
- Can you tell me your faith story? Can you tell me how Jesus became your forever friend?
- Can you tell me why we celebrate communion?
- Do your parents agree it is time for you to celebrate communion?

**For additional teaching material:**

*Building Faith Kids, Growing Like Jesus*, Wesleyan Publishing House, 2005.

*Building Faith Kids, Knowing God's Truth*, Wesleyan Publishing House, 2005.

*The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church*, Wesleyan Publishing House, 2004.

# COMMUNION CLASS NOTE GUIDE

(student/parent notes)

## 1. Communion in the Bible

Jesus' Example: Matthew 26:26-30

Early Church Example: I Corinthians 11:23-26

## 2. Communion is a Sacrament (John 1:16)

Sacred moments to \_\_\_\_\_ what God has done

An outward expression of an \_\_\_\_\_ event

God offers a special blessing or gift – His \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Why communion? (Luke 22:19-20 and I Corinthians 10:16-17)

To \_\_\_\_\_ Christ's death on the cross

To \_\_\_\_\_ God for His grace and love shown in Jesus Christ

\_\_\_\_\_ Christ's sacrifice on our behalf

4. How do we participate in communion?

By coming \_\_\_\_\_ and thoughtfully

By \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves to receive the bread and juice

By receiving the elements with reverence and \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you ready?

Do you believe?

Share your faith story:

Why do we celebrate communion?

Do your parents agree?