

# *The Joyful Feast in God's Household*

*Seven Communion Lessons  
for Children 5-12*

Carolyn Boyer



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# Introduction

“The metaphor of church as **household** of God (Ephesians 2:19) offers a vision of congregational life as a space for grace, where in worship, in study, in the integration of faith and life, the forming of faith enables transformation.”<sup>1</sup>

Jenna’s large brown eyes reflect flames from the candles on the communion table. She sees the bread on shiny silver plates and the trays of juice laid out on a bright multi-coloured tablecloth. Cradled in her father’s strong arms, surrounded by her church household, she clasps her small hands together and emits a breathy “ohhhhh.” She looks into her father’s face and says in a happy, excited voice, “Eesus lubz me.” Three-year-old Jenna pronounces these words remembering a hymn chorus she’s sung and a poster of Jesus with children. Adults around her smile, recognizing her profound statement. Jenna unknowingly sets the scene for this Sunday’s communion celebration.

Just as the faith of the young can nurture the household of God, a congregation’s priority must be to provide enriching ministry to children. Paul reminds us of the importance of early childhood faith. He notes Timothy’s “sincere” faith nurtured by Lois, his grandmother, and Eunice, his mother (2 Timothy 1:5). The early years of life are crucial for nurturing the seeds of faith. “Faith is a gift of God constantly renewed in word and sacrament and in the shared life of God’s people.”<sup>2</sup>

“The intentional formation of young Christians is the most important ministry contemporary churches can undertake.... Nurture is necessary because our culture shapes children for a world shorn of God”, writes Ellen T. Charry.<sup>3</sup> Realizing the importance of this ministry, the

113th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1987 adopted the recommendation “that sessions be encouraged to invite baptized children of faith to the Lord’s Table.” Helpful resources for understanding and implementing this decision are available through the Life and Mission Agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

*The Joyful Feast in God’s Household* contains seven communion lessons designed to nurture children along their journeys of faith. These lessons

- can be used independently or in a seven-week series
- are adaptable for small or large classes
- contain activity centres and closing worship
- may be used in a multi-age grouping — ages 5 to 12
- offer choices geared to group needs
- support teachers with theme reflections, resource sheets, and teaching ideas
- use familiar materials (The Book of Praise, Living Faith)
- can be adapted for an intergenerational event, a day apart or a weekend retreat.

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1 Elizabeth Francis Caldwell, *Come Unto Me: Rethinking the Sacraments for Children*, United Church Press, 1996.

2 *Living Faith, A Statement of Christian Belief*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, section 6.

3 *The Christian Century*, 16/2/94.

## Important Message

In several of the seven lessons, the children participate in a liturgical feast which is similar to communion. It is important to remember that the teachers are not administering communion. In our denomination (The Presbyterian Church in Canada), we say that God orders ministry by calling some to special tasks in the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. For this reason, only Ministers of Word and Sacrament administer communion. Ministers of Word and Sacrament are set apart to preach the gospel, celebrate baptism and holy communion and exercise pastoral care in Christ’s name.

Teachers should, therefore, call the liturgical snack *The Great Feast*, rather than communion. *The Great Feast* is a way to prepare children for what will happen in communion with the minister and the whole congregation. *The Great Feast* is a joyful informal time. The children share fruit, cheese, bread, and juice. This is a pleasant time of talking and sharing. It is appropriate at this time to talk about food and the great feasts Jesus gave, such as feeding the five thousand, sharing a meal with Zacchaeus, Mary and Martha, and the last supper.

# Lesson Overview

Each lesson is broken down as follows:

## A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

- i. Main idea
- ii. Foundational biblical texts
- iii. Background for leaders and helpers
- iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

Communion is an important topic. Allow sufficient preparatory time for reflection on the theme, development of the lesson plan, and the gathering of materials.

## B. Lesson Plan

- i. Prepare
- ii. Gather and begin
- iii. Hear the story
- iv. Explore the theme (learning activity groups)

Drama

Art

Music

Meal — *The Great Feast* (in some lessons)

- v. Respond in worship

This resource suggests many types of learning activities. Use those best suited to your group and setting. Remember, though, that all people learn best when they are able to choose from a variety of activities.

# For Teachers, Leaders and Helpers

## A. Understanding the learners

In their adult years, the children in your class will remember you, the teacher, most of all — the expression in your eyes, the warmth of your voice, the spontaneous, creative experiences you encourage (“Yes, let’s go outside and see the bird’s nest.”). They’ll remember your affirmation of their unique gifts of playfulness, curiosity, honesty, trust, and ability to believe. They’ll appreciate your compassion and joy in being with them, the “I wonder” questions you ask, your honest reflections (“I’m sorry, we’ll try again” or “I don’t know; what do you think?” and “That’s OK, we’ll help you clean it up.”). They’ll remember that Jesus loves them because of you.

### Today’s child and the family

As you prepare to teach, think of the variety of family structures in which children live. Children live in families that meet or deny their daily needs. It is important that the faith community nurtures well its children and their families. Be sensitive to different last names, changing addresses, and alternative living situations. Ensure that children living temporarily in a shelter feel welcome in your class. Sol Gordon, in his book *All Families Are Different* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000), promotes understanding and appreciation of what it means to be part of family. This helpful book for children and adults may be borrowed from a library.

### Baptism and communion

Find out if the children in your class have been baptized, since this is a prerequisite for participating in communion in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Some children may not know if they have been baptized. Ask the child’s parent/caregiver or your pastor for guidance. (See parent/caregiver sample letter, Appendix A p.42, on baptism and communion).

### Uniquely different

The children in your class have their own unique ways of being. They are quiet, shy, friendly, energetic etc. Learning styles differ also; some learn best by listening while others need to see or do in order to be fully engaged. As you get to know your children, enjoy their unique differences and plan lessons accordingly.

Here are some general descriptions of children:

- **5 – 8-year-olds** are in the “wonder years.” The world is exciting; incredible growth and development occur. They are developing the ability to reason and to consider other points of view. Vivid imaginations inspire play. Restless and energetic children appreciate varied learning activities. Reading skills and abilities vary.
- **9 – 12-year-olds** usually enjoy being involved in group projects with their peers. The ability to reason is established and major cognitive growth takes place. They are aware of their varied abilities and reading skills. They need to feel comfortable and accepted in discussions. They have some awareness of world issues and are concerned about fair play. They like to be useful, helpful and be appreciated.
- **In a multi-age class** all children need to feel important, loved and respected. Older children can be mentors to younger ones. Differently challenged children need to be welcomed and know their contributions are valued.

## B. Room preparation

Create an attractive, stimulating classroom in order to convey the wonder-filled drama found in communion. Each lesson contains ideas for the room setup and for the items needed for the theme of the day. After choosing the learning activities for your specific situation and children, make a simple sketch of the room layout. Include the wonder table, gathering activity table, story and reflecting area (can also be the worship area minus the worship table) activity centres (drama, art, and/or music), and the closing worship space containing the worship table.

## C. Lesson preparation and ideas

Each lesson provides step-by-step instructions for leaders/helpers.

1. With other leaders/helpers, read the main idea, foundational biblical texts, and leader background sections and participate in the reflection activities found at the beginning of each lesson.
2. Read the theme story and scripture references.
3. Review the prepare section at the beginning of each lesson plan. Decide who will arrange the class space, gather materials, and contact others to provide material and human resources (costumes, food for the meal, cardboard, music assistance, etc.).
4. Prepare materials needed for each of the learning activities you choose to use.
5. As required, make use of the following resources:
  - letter to parent(s)/caregivers (Appendix A)
  - symbols (Appendix B)
  - sign language for rituals and hymns (Appendix C)
  - finger labyrinth (Appendix D).

## D. Explanation of activities and worship

### Wonder table

A wonder table is the centre of a small worship area. The wonder table holds items that symbolize mystery and wonder from God's world, a Bible, and the theme of the lesson. Place a special cloth on the table to remind children that this is a wonder table with symbols to see and gently touch. Include for each lesson:

- **Bibles** — NRSV version and *The Family Story Bible*<sup>4</sup>;
- **globe** or map of the world, on which a small card with the words FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD should be taped;
- **chalice or cup & roll or pita bread** on a plate;
- **art prints**, one for each lesson (see individual lessons);
- **container** for offering;
- **wonder items** from nature such as special stones, a geode, or a huge bone;
- **basket** to hold symbols of the lesson's theme.

At the closing worship time, children will pick up some of the items and move them to the worship area. Tell children that in worship these things remind us of their special meaning as we pray, sing, think, and talk quietly about and to Jesus.

### Art prints or illustrations

Art prints or illustrations relating to the lesson themes can be found in a local library, in children's picture books, and in recycled curriculum material. Art titles are suggested in each lesson. Place pictures at children's viewing level.

When introducing art work, say, "By viewing an artist's picture, you will discover new ideas, and feelings. Understanding art takes practice and patience. Some pictures tell a story, some show images of people in daily life and some are about feelings with no clear, recognizable image. Put yourself in the picture and ask questions. What is God saying through the artist? Enjoy using your imaginations."

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4 *The Family Story Bible*, Ralph Milton, Wood Lake Books, 1996. This book is available at the Book Room at The Presbyterian Church in Canada (800-619-7301; bookroom@presbyterian.ca).



## Hear the story

*The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton is recommended for use because it contains imaginative paraphrases of Bible stories which can spark imagination and passion in children and adults. It's easy to read with helpful illustrations. Tell children that these stories come from the Bible and are written for children and adults to read and understand.

## Story discussions

Questions and statements like "What do you imagine happened?" or "I wonder what it felt like to be..." help deepen children's understanding of the Bible and of Jesus. Wonder includes perceiving mystery and being surprised, necessary ingredients in nurturing faith. Hopefully this sense of wonder continues throughout our lives, giving us visions and dreams to be the kingdom of God on earth.

## Time machine

Use this activity **option** for entry into the story time or drama activity. The time machine can be a large appliance box or a cloth-covered card table. Children enter the "machine" from the present and emerge into the past as a teacher or helper rings a bell or strikes a gong (metal plate) to signal the passage into the past. Participants may dress in biblical costume after entering the "past". Suggested attire: a scarf, cardboard sandals (bare feet), a robe, long cloth. Children may sit on floor mats or pillows to hear the story or while planning their drama.

## Prayer net

Prayers can be spoken, thought, sung, written, painted, and danced. A prayer net creates a visual expression of prayer. The net can be any size (at least 2 feet/60 cm wide) and type: fishing or gardening, lace or plastic. Suspend the prayer net along a wall or bulletin board, or drape it over a flower stand, easel or candelabra. Cut different colours of yarn into 6 inch/16 cm lengths and place in a basket. As prayers are offered, a piece of yarn is tied to the net. With use, the net becomes a kind of tapestry of prayer.

Explain the prayer net to the children by saying, "With the prayer net we can make something beautiful for God. When you think or say a prayer choose a piece of yarn and tie it to the net. The coloured yarn reminds us of the rainbow and the promise that God loves us, listens to our prayers, and will never leave us."

## Labyrinth (see Appendix D)

The labyrinth is a prayerful metaphor for our faith journey. Early Christians took a vow to walk in the steps of Jesus by taking a pilgrimage. When the pilgrimage was too dangerous or too long, pilgrims walked large stone labyrinths made in the floor of many cathedrals. In the Middle Ages walking the labyrinth was a way to symbolize this pilgrimage. The cathedral in Chartres, France, still has its original labyrinth. Floor, garden, and finger labyrinths are being used today as methods of expressing prayers and spiritual journeys

A labyrinth is not a maze, which has many paths and can be confusing. The labyrinth has one path leading to the centre and out again.

## Directions for using a finger labyrinth

Demonstrate the finger labyrinth at the closing worship or before the Bible story. Explain the finger labyrinth by saying, "This is a way of thinking about our journey of following Jesus. It is like following a road or a path to a special place. It is like life's journey from birth to death. The Holy Spirit is with us on our journey even when we are farthest away from the centre or God."

A finger labyrinth can be made with cardboard, glue and yarn or drawn on paper. See page 48.

Tell the children, "Here's how to use the finger labyrinth. Position your finger on your finger labyrinth at START and slowly move along the path toward the centre. Each time you come to a curve, stop. You might think about Jesus, a story from the Bible, or pray silently, giving thanks or asking for help. Move on to the next curve. When you reach the centre, give thanks for the special meal of communion and the gift of Jesus. Using your finger follow the path back to START, thinking about how you can be Jesus' helper in the world."

## Wonder table in the worship space

A low table or sturdy box can serve as a wonder table in a quiet space used for worship.

Cover the box or table with a tablecloth imprinted with communion symbols.

Use carpet pieces as sitting mats around the table or box.

## Three ways of making the wonder table cloth prior to gathering

1. Paint a rainbow (God's promise of love) on a white tablecloth. Make symbol sponges by cutting sponges into communion symbol shapes. (See page 43.) When the cloth is dry, dip symbol sponges in black or purple paint and press onto the rainbow or plain tablecloth. Let dry.
2. Stitch together bands of rainbow coloured cloth. Stencil, paint, or outline with black fabric markers or sponges. Add Christian and communion symbols: chalice, grapes, bread, wheat sheaves, cross, scallop shell (baptism), fish. See Appendix B, p.43.
3. Cut symbol shapes from felt. Pin or glue them to a tablecloth.

## Items on the wonder table

The children can take items from the wonder table to the worship table for the Respond in Worship activity. Include the chalice, bread, Bible, globe, candle, offering container, symbol basket, and food. Add items made in class activities.

## Music

Use the *Book of Praise* and/or other songbooks used in congregational worship. Children appreciate learning the hymns and prayers familiar to the congregation. Ask a helper to accompany on a piano, keyboard, flute, or whatever instrument is available. Handmade instruments add enthusiasm, joyful sound, rhythm, and movement. Encourage joyful singing.

## Sign language for rituals and hymns (see Appendix C)

Signing words and hymns is an expressive, creative way to involve the whole body in worship. Children love to learn signing. They also love to be helpful. Children can lead the whole church family in signing the words at communion and also enables those with hearing impairments to be included. See Appendix C to learn the signing for teaching the children the communion ritual beginning ("The Lord be with you," etc.) and a sample hymn, Eat this bread. Additional helpful resources are the book *The Joy of Signing 2nd edition* by Lottie L. Riekehof (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1987), and the video *Lift Up Your Hands: An Introduction to Signing in Children and Worship* (Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1998).

## A liturgical snack: The Great Feast

*The Great Feast* is a special snack that prepares children for a special meal — communion. *The Children and Worship Program*, endorsed and used in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, uses the term *The Great Feast* to describe the liturgical snack which the children enjoy with their worship leader.<sup>5</sup> This is a happy, relaxed time. The food and drink may reflect the story of the day. For instance, when the story of the lost sheep is told, the food may be chopped lettuce (resembling grass) and oatmeal cookies (reminding the children that sheep eat oats.) The beverage is water — cool, clear water, like the sheep drink. During *The Great Feast* the worship leader models what might happen at communion — food is distributed, but everyone waits to eat until all are served. Sometimes, in the seven lesson plans, liturgical responses similar to those used in communion are used in the feast.

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5 Children & Worship is used throughout many Presbyterian churches in Canada. A national trainer, Linda Shaw, provides training and support for this program. For more information, call (204) 831-7973 or e-mail: il3shaw@mts.net.

## Lesson

# 1

# Communion: an act of Belonging

## A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

### i. Main idea

In communion we celebrate our belonging in God's household.

### ii. Foundational biblical texts

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6: 4-7)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him. (Acts 2:39)

### iii. Background for leaders and helpers

We all need to belong. In this lesson we affirm that baptized children are accepted as covenant members in the household of God and are included as full participants in the family's meal, the sacrament of communion. (As children mature in the faith, it is hoped that they will decide to become professing members as youth or adults.) For information about the biblical concept of covenant refer to a Bible dictionary.

Citizenship in God's household is recognized by the sacrament of baptism. It is the ritual of initiation into the Church of Jesus Christ. Baptism affirms what God has done for us in Christ, and through it we declare God's faithfulness to us and our children. Using these or similar words, the minister affirms the meaning of baptism: "By the waters of baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit, God claims us and calls each one by name. God unites us to Christ in his death and resurrection and grafts us into the body of Christ as members of the Church."

In Jesus we become a family which is held together by faith, not by flesh and blood relationships. This promise of a new family receives poignant expression in Jesus' words in John 14:18: "I will not leave you orphaned." As children of God, even people who are separated from their birth families belong to an extended family, described in the New Testament as the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). The meaning of baptism is affirmed as children, with the rest of their church family, share the family meal.

## iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea, foundational biblical texts, and background** for leaders and helpers.
2. Consider the following questions:
  - When did I first realize that I belonged to a church family?
  - Who sustained my sense of belonging in my church family?
  - What special events or symbols remind you of your belonging to the household of God?
3. Read "Baptism", *Living Faith*, 7.6.
4. Read "When Jesus was a Child" from *The Family Story Bible*. This story helps children understand how Jesus, as a boy, lived in covenant in God's family. Today, by our baptisms, we are part of that same family. If you do not have *The Family Story Bible*, read the story about Jesus and the children found in Mark 10:13-16. This story emphasizes Jesus' acceptance and inclusion of children. Ask yourself, "Why did Jesus say, 'Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it'?" (Luke 18:17)
5. Notify families about bringing remembrances of their child's baptism (baptismal certificate, photos, candle) to the class. Leaders and helpers will also bring their remembrances.
6. Pray (silently, in unison, or as a litany):

Gracious Lord, in baptism we are part of your family.  
Thank you for our place to be.  
In baptism, Jesus claims us as his own.  
Remind us daily, Lord, whose we are.  
In baptism, we claim your promises.  
Thank you for welcoming us to your table.  
Made disciples in our baptism, we nurture your children.  
May we be both teachers and learners.  
In your name, we offer ourselves.  
Amen.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Theme poster

Prepare a poster with the words IN COMMUNION WE CELEBRATE BELONGING TO GOD'S FAMILY. Cut the poster into enough puzzle pieces so that each child and leader can find one piece. Before the children arrive, hide these pieces around the room.

#### Wonder table

Display communion symbols: chalice (or cup), roll or bread on a plate, Bible, and globe. Include the symbol basket, baptism memorabilia of children, leaders, and helpers and a congregational photo directory or list.

#### Music

Print the words of the chorus *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731) on poster board with sketches of the hand actions. Use verses 1, 2 & 4.

#### Symbol basket

For symbol ideas, see Appendix B, p.43. Place in the symbol basket to be placed on the wonder table. Note: if you choose the activity *Make Baptism Symbols* (see p.13), the children may add the symbols rather than having the leaders prepare them before the session.

#### Art print

Display an art print or other illustration of a family celebrating a meal. The children's picture book *In November* by Cynthia Rylant (Harcourt, Inc. NY 2000) contains a rich, warm special meal gathering painted by the illustrator Jill Kastner. Borrow this book from your local community library.

## Fish symbol nametags

Pre-cut fish symbols from heavy cardboard to use as name tags in the gathering activity. Obtain yarn or safety pins to attach the tags.

## Meal — *The Great Feast*

Prepare individual fruit cups (small pieces of fresh fruit: apples, bananas, oranges and grapes, mixed in a little bit of lemon juice to keep fruit colour) and crackers for the closing worship. Place on trays to use in the closing worship.

## Wonder table

See page 7.

## Options: prayer net, labyrinth

See page 8.

### Optional activity

Play a musical “glad to know you” game. To do this you need a cassette or CD player for music and open floor space. When the music plays, children walk in all directions, avoiding contact. When the music stops, each child shakes the hand of the closest person and discovers as much information about that person as possible until the music starts again (5-8 sec.) Demonstrate how the game works using a few sample questions (e.g. How old are you? Do you have a pet? What’s your favourite cereal?). Repeat the process, shaking a new hand each time. See *For the Fun of It*, by Marta Harrison & the Non-violence and Children Program (Philadelphia, 1976).

If you choose to use the time machine activity (see page 8), it would be used at this time as a transition into the story time.

## ii. Gather and begin (10-15 minutes)

1. As children arrive, invite them to place their baptism memorabilia on the wonder table and to print their names on cardboard fish-symbol name tags. As the children are making their name tags, say, “The fish symbol was a secret code used by early Christians to identify themselves to other Christians in the days of persecution. A Christian would draw a fish sign (outline) in the dust with a stick and then erase it quickly. ICHTHUS, the English version of the Greek letters of the word ‘fish’, formed an acrostic that declared Jesus Christ God’s Son Saviour.”
2. Encourage children to examine and talk about the items on the wonder table.
3. Ask each child to search the room and find just one puzzle piece. Bring the piece to the wonder table and put the puzzle together. Then read the theme of the day from the theme poster.

## iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

Call the children together to hear the story. Introduce the following ritual opening commonly used during communion and which will be used in each lesson. Teach the signing gestures (see Appendix C, p.45).

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

Read one of the following stories:

1. “When Jesus Was a Child,” *The Family Story Bible*, p.170. Introduce the story by saying, “The Bible doesn’t tell us much about Jesus’ younger life, but we know he was a boy living in his family, learning stories, worshipping God, playing with friends, and celebrating religious holidays with his family. He was Jewish and knew he belonged to God’s family in a similar way that you know you belong to God’s family.”

After reading the story, ask and wonder:

- “What Old Testament Bible stories do you think Jesus knew?” (Show the children that the Bible has two parts and explain that the stories of Jesus’ life [New Testament] weren’t written yet so Jesus knew just the Old Testament.)
- “I wonder what Jesus did as a boy. What do you think?”
- “Jesus was the oldest of his brothers and sisters. Are any of you the oldest children in your family? I wonder what it’s like to be the oldest.”

2. The story of Jesus and the children from Mark 10:13-16.

After reading the story, ask and wonder:

- Why did the children want to talk to and be close to Jesus?
- Why did the disciples want the children to go away?
- I wonder what the mothers felt about Jesus
- If you had been one of the children in the story, I wonder what you would have asked or said to Jesus.

#### **iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)**

Choose learning activities suitable for your group. If the class is small, select one activity; larger classes may be offered a choice of several activities.

##### **Drama (suitable for all ages)**

1. Dramatize either of the Bible stories. Provide cloth, scarves, heavy yarn, and fabric pieces for costumes. Remembering Jesus as a boy, children can pretend to be his family (brothers, sisters or friends) who gather to retell Old Testament stories and eat a meal. The story of Jesus welcoming children includes men, mothers, disciples, and children all wanting to hear what Jesus was saying.
2. Dramatize contemporary situations about belonging to a family. Prepare short skits for any or all of the following situations. Reflective questions are suggested for developing each skit, but add your own questions as well.
  - Have a homecoming meal for a parent who's been away in another country for six months. (Who is invited? What food will you have? What activities are planned?)
  - Your congregation has a special meal in the church hall for the oldest members in the congregation. (How do you decorate? What songs or hymns do you choose to sing? What games will you play?)
  - Jesus is coming to visit in your church later today. (How do you set up the room? What about food? How will everyone get to talk with him? What will you tell him about life today?)

##### **Art (suitable for all ages)**

1. Make a family picture album. Invite the children to draw a picture of their family seated around a table for a special meal such as a birthday or holiday. Provide markers, crayons, pens, coloured pencils and sheets of white paper. Mount the completed pictures onto pieces of coloured construction paper and place them in a binder. Title the album FAMILY MEALS.
2. Make life-size outlines. Each child lies down on a large sheet of brown paper while another traces around the body outline with black crayon or chalk. Add facial features and clothing detail. Print I'M IN GOD'S FAMILY on the front (T-shirt style). Cut out the shapes and mount on a wall or on room dividers. If possible, leave the figures on display to be seen by the congregation.
3. Make baptism symbols. Use a fish, scallop shell, or cross shapes. An excellent source for simple shape outlines is Jeanne Fogle's book, *Symbols of God's Love, Codes and Passwords*. These can be made of cardboard, play-dough, pipe cleaners, and Popsicle sticks. Provide materials to decorate the symbols. Put on the worship table for the closing worship. Children may take their symbols home as reminders of belonging in the household of God.
4. Create a diorama (scene in a box). Provide a table with materials for making a diorama illustrating one of the stories. Materials might include wooden blocks, plain wooden figures, pipe cleaners, twigs, stones, plasticine, play-dough, and fabric scraps. Build the diorama within the top of a large box lid with edges (or on heavy cardboard). Label the scene with a printed sign. If space is available, place the diorama on the worship table as a reminder of the day's theme.

##### **Music (all ages)**

1. Learn *I am the church! You are the church!* (*The Book of Praise*, #475).
2. Learn the communion hymn *Eat this bread* (*The Book of Praise*, #527) to sing at the closing worship. This is a simple hymn with few words and should be sung prayerfully. Repeat continuously. Sign this hymn for added worshipful drama and meaning (see Appendix C, p.45).

## **v. Respond in worship (10 minutes — Modify if necessary)**

Invite the children to add the worship symbols to the wonder table. Include the Bible, chalice, and plate with pita bread or roll. Also place the tray with the cups of fruit and crackers on the table. Provide quiet gathering music as all sit on rug mats in a circle around the worship table.

1. Light the candle to signal the beginning of worship.
2. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).
  - Leader: The Lord be with you.
  - Children: And also with you.
  - Leader: Lift up your hearts.
  - Children: We lift them up to the Lord.
  - Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.
  - Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
  - Leader: As followers of Jesus, we belong to a church family. Meal celebrations are special in our own families and in God's family. In the communion meal we celebrate our belonging to God's family.
3. Sing *Eat this bread* (*The Book of Praise*, #527).
4. Share a meal (*The Great Feast*). Distribute the crackers and fruit around the circle. Ask children to wait until everyone has food so all can eat together. As each child takes a cracker, invite him/her to say, "I am in God's family." As the fruit is received, invite the child to say, "Thank you, God, for loving me." Lead the children in prayer, saying, "Dear God, thank you for our church family and for the times we share together." Eat when all have been served. Share any concerns in conversation.
5. Ask the children to stand, hold hands and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731).
6. Extinguish the candle.
7. Name each child, followed by the words, "May God's peace be with you."

# Lesson

# 2

# Communion: an act of Forgiveness

## A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

### i. Main idea

We celebrate God's gift of forgiveness in the Lord's Supper.

### ii. Foundational biblical texts

For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

### iii. Background for leaders and helpers

What's the connection between the occasional eating of a cube of bread, the drinking of a thimbleful of wine or grape juice, and forgiveness? The association of poured wine with shed blood and broken bread with pierced flesh is disturbing to adults, but points to some basic Christian beliefs about God's response to human need.

Central to Christian faith is the recognition that every human being falls short of God's standards and is in need of reconciliation to God. Signs of our broken relationship with our Creator include wilful disobedience, moral failure, ethical indifference, arrogance, and pride. In a moment of great honesty and candour the Apostle Paul wrote (Romans 7:19, 24): "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Paul was asking how a right relationship might be re-established between the creature and the Creator. He found the answer in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In response to his question, "Who will rescue me?" he replies, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25). Paul understood that Jesus' death and resurrection enables reconciliation with God.

*Living Faith* 3.4.3 presents an excellent summary of the variety of motifs that describe how Jesus saves us from our sin: God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the scriptures describe as the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest. It is also the innocent dying for the guilty, the ransom of a slave, payment of a debt, and victory over the powers of evil. Such expressions interpret the love of God revealing the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of our Lord's work. Yet that love we cannot fully explain. God's grace, received by faith alone, pardons and justifies, redeems and reconciles us.

Our statement of faith acknowledges that the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection is a "mystery" that we cannot fully explain. How, then, is it to be presented to children? Children understand what is right and wrong in varying degrees, just like adults do. They also experience alienation/rejection and acceptance/reconciliation. Although they may have a limited vocabulary to describe what they experience (e.g. sad, bad, happy), the experiences themselves are not limited to a particular chronological age.



Like adults, children gain understanding through stories. They also appreciate the dramatic aspects of communion. They recognize the ritual as something special. Even a young child is able to make the connection that coming to the table to eat and drink with everyone else in the church is an experience of acceptance associated with Jesus. They are not able to talk about “God’s grace” or the “blood of the covenant”, but while receiving communion they will certainly sense that Jesus did something very special for them and that they are included in the body of Christ.

#### iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea, foundational biblical texts, and background for leaders and helpers.**
2. Consider the following question: Do I have memories of a communion when I experienced forgiveness and reconciliation?
3. Read “Sin Separates Us From God”, *Living Faith*, 2.5
4. Recall your childhood experiences of being forgiven. Do you remember forgiving your friends and family members? What church experiences nurtured your feelings of acceptance? How and when did you learn that God loves and accepts you just as you are? What ideas might the children in your class have about being forgiven, accepted, and loved, especially in their church family? How will you nurture those children most in need of being accepted?
5. Read Luke 15:1-2, 11-32 in preparation for the lesson’s story. Have these passages changed in meaning as you grew older?
6. Write and pray your own litany (see the litany in Lesson 1) using the words ‘acceptance’ and ‘forgiveness’, and/or the words that express your prayers for teaching this lesson. What does forgiveness look like? Think of a symbol for forgiveness such as people shaking hands, a chalice, something soft, praying hands, or a word. Share your thoughts with others.

“It is true that sin is the cause of all this pain; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”  
— *Julian of Norwich*<sup>6</sup>

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Theme poster

Prepare a poster or banner with the words IN COMMUNION, WE CELEBRATE FORGIVENESS, GOD’S GIFT OF LOVE.

#### Wonder table

Display communion symbols (chalice, plate with roll, Bible, globe) and the symbol basket.

#### Symbol basket

From magazines, newspapers, or recycled curriculum, cut out pictures of people praying, shaking hands, hugging, or imaged in any act of reconciliation. Place them in the symbol basket.

#### Art print

Pablo Picasso’s *The Tragedy* can be found in an art book or on the internet.

#### Name tags

Prepare cardboard crosses to be used as nametags.

Hearts — Use construction paper to cut three heart shapes (5” diameter) per child.

Sentences — On a large sheet of paper or blackboard, write the following sentence beginnings: “I’m sorry...”; “I forgive...”; “I’m happy when....” Children will copy these words on their paper hearts and complete the sentences.

Large Cardboard Cross — Make a sturdy cross to which the hearts made in the gathering can be taped. Alternatively, use a basket to hold the paper hearts.

#### Preparing the meal

Prepare bread and juice for the closing worship. Learn *We come to ask your forgiveness* (*The Book of Praise*, #201) for the closing worship.

6 *Revelations of Divine Love*, Penguin Books, 1982.

## Options

Time machine, prayer net, labyrinth (see p.8)

### ii. Gather and begin (10 minutes)

1. Welcome the children and assist them in making name tags, worn on a string around the neck or pinned onto clothing.
2. Read the theme poster aloud and talk about the communion symbols on the wonder table and the pictures in the symbol basket. How do the pictures show sorrow and forgiveness?
3. Invite the children to write or draw on the paper hearts answers to any or all of the statements written on the sheet or blackboard. Give a few examples: "I'm sorry I called you names," "I forgive my sister for hitting me," "I'm happy when we're not fighting." Write other sentences about being sorry and forgiving others.
4. Leaders and helpers participate in this activity too. Assist the children in taping their finished hearts onto the large cardboard cross or place them in a basket. The completed cross or the basket of hearts will be placed on the worship table for the closing worship. Express appreciation for all contributions.

### iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

Recite and sign:

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

Introduce the story saying, "This is a story that Jesus told. It is called the story of the prodigal son. A prodigal is someone who wastes things. As the story is being read, close your eyes and put yourself into this story. Perhaps you're a younger child helping in the kitchen or the field. Think about what you see, hear and smell, the clothes, faces, the dusty road, and the bright sun. Hear the voices of the father, younger son and older brother."

Read "A Loving Father" (Luke 15:1-2, 11-32) from *The Family Story Bible* (pg. 228-229). After reading the story, ask:

- I wonder how the younger son felt at the beginning of the story.
- How did he feel working on the farm?
- What did he think as he walked home to his father?
- I wonder why his father had a party for him.
- Why was the older brother angry?
- I wonder why Jesus told this story.

### iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)

Choose learning activities that are suitable for your group. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A large group with several leaders may use all activities simultaneously or set up two or three activities.

#### Drama

Select suitable activity.

1. Dramatize the Bible story. Provide a few scarves and cloths for costumes and cardboard pieces, sticks, and boxes for props. An older child can narrate the story reading *The Family Story Bible*.
2. Consider the following three situations and dramatize possible responses:
  - a) Sarah is feeling bad. She lied to her parents. If she had told the truth, her father would not have been angry and yelled at her. Sarah always cries when her Dad yelled. Her parents teach her that lying is bad. But for Sarah, telling the truth seems worse sometimes. Sarah feels sad and lonely. What would you say to Sarah?
  - b) John feels so angry. His brother got to stay up late to watch TV. It wasn't fair. Because John was upset, he pushed his little sister against the wall as he walked to his room. She began to cry and ran to Mom. Now he was in big trouble. What will John do?
  - c) Anu has just moved into the neighbourhood. A group of girls in her class start calling her names. Anu is from another country and she sounds and looks different. These girls follow her around the playground teasing her. No one seems to care. How could you help Anu?

3. Create a table-top drama. Younger children may act out The Prodigal Son or their own forgiveness story on a table top using play-dough or plasticine for creating the figures, and assorted pieces of wood, textured fabric (felt, fur), and cardboard. An older child or leader can help remind the children of the story or help them with their own stories of doing right and wrong, being sorry and forgiven, or forgiving someone who has hurt them.

### **Art (suitable for all ages)**

Begin the activity by asking these questions: “What colour is forgiveness? What shape is forgiveness? What does forgiveness look like?” Affirm the children’s responses. Observe that different lines and shapes (circles, squares, triangles, and squiggly lines) can be used to describe words and feelings. Hold up several familiar shapes to illustrate how this is so (e.g. red stop sign shape, yellow highway sign with curve, red heart, happy face). Show the children Christian symbols (see Appendix B, p.43).

1. Create a symbol. Invite each child to select a symbol that conveys forgiveness. Provide coloured construction paper, markers, and crayons. Offer assistance as necessary. Some children may want to add a drawing or photo from a magazine depicting forgiveness or reconciliation.
2. Draw or paint a picture. Make a picture based on “The Loving Father” story to take home and hang in a special place. The scene could be biblical or contemporary. Provide crayons, markers, coloured pencils, and water colour paints.
3. Create a card. Make an “I care about you” card to give to someone who is lonely or sad and needs to be reminded of God’s love. Include a symbol of God’s love that you have created.

### **v. Respond in worship (5-15 minutes — Modify if necessary)**

1. Gather in the Worship area around the wonder table. Play recorded worshipful music as all quietly find their places.
2. When all are seated, introduce the hymn *We come to ask your forgiveness* (*The Book of Praise*, #201). Non-readers may learn the chorus while readers sing both verse and chorus. Use small drums and/or large coffee tins with plastic lids to softly tap with fingers. A leader or older child may play the tune on a keyboard.
3. Light the candle to signal the beginning of worship.
4. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts

Children: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: In communion, Jesus invites us to a special meal. There are many reasons for this meal. One is to remember that God loves us and forgives us even though we sometimes forget God and disobey God’s laws about being loving and helpful. We can always tell God about our anger, sadness, and hurt feelings and about what we have done to hurt other people. In the taste, touch, and smell of the bread and “wine”, we are reminded that God forgives and loves us just the way we are. This is what Jesus taught us about God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: Let us sing and pray.

5. Sing the hymn *We come to ask your forgiveness* (*The Book of Praise*, #201).
6. Share a meal (*The Great Feast*). Sit in a circle and as the plate of bread is passed, invite each child to complete the sentence, “I am sorry for....” As the cups of juice are passed, invite children to say, “Thank you, God, for loving me.”
7. Ask the children to stand, hold hands, and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731)
8. Extinguish the candle.
9. Name each child, followed by the words, “May God’s peace be with you.”

# Lesson

# 3

## Communion: an act of Remembering and Remembrance

### A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

#### i. Main idea

In communion we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and celebrate his presence in our lives today.

#### ii. Foundational biblical text

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? (Mark 8:18)

#### iii. Background for leaders and helpers

The sacrament of communion is a remembrance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In this lesson we remember that Jesus lived among us full of grace and truth, and that we experience his living presence as we gather around the table.

Some things stimulate living memories. An old teddy bear, grandmother's brooch, a family Bible, yearbooks, a baptismal certificate, a photo, or an odour can bring back memories. These things remind us of who we are, help set boundaries for our behaviour, and are a source of comfort in the midst of difficulties. It's as if some things are set apart for us and have meaning far beyond their apparent value. So it is in communion. Common bread and wine or juice are set before us in such a way that we remember the sacrificial death of Jesus and experience his living presence among and within us.

We remember what we have experienced and what we have learned. The children you are honoured to teach come to the class with numerous and varied childhood experiences. They have known joy, success, failure, pain, and loss in a childhood context. Their knowledge of Jesus will depend upon what they have learned primarily from family members and in church school. We do not expect them to be adults in their understanding of communion. Throughout our lives we grow in knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and faith. The Jesus we "remember" and believe in today is not the Jesus we remembered when we were 3, 7, or 12 years of age, but at those ages our faith was real.

#### iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea**, **foundational biblical texts**, and **background for leaders and helpers**.
2. As teachers, nurturers of children, we are entrusted to communicate the wonder and mystery of communion. To prepare to teach this lesson on Communion as Remembering, consider the following questions and share your responses with other leaders/helpers.
  - Recalling your adult experiences in communion, what words, images, and thoughts come to mind?

- Do you have a memory of a particularly meaningful communion experience? What made it special?
  - When you receive communion, do you remember Jesus in relation to a particular event in his life?
3. Remember your childhood. Recall your childhood experiences of communion. What did you observe about the Lord's Supper and the adults involved? Were you excluded?
  4. Think about the children in your class. How is their experience of communion and worship different from yours? What is important for them in this sacrament? What will they observe in the service of communion in your church family? How can they be included as valued participants?
  5. Read Matthew 26: 17-30, the scripture text for the lesson, and "The Last Supper" from *The Family Story Bible*, pp.246-247.
  6. Read *Living Faith*, 7.7, "Holy Communion."
  7. Pray for God's presence and guidance. Remember each child and other leaders by name as you prepare to teach about the joyful mystery that is communion.
  8. Before the day of the class, ask children (and leaders/helpers) to bring an item (photo, gift, object) that reminds them of a special person in their life. The item will be displayed on the wonder table.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Main idea poster

Prepare a poster with the words AT THE LORD'S SUPPER, WE REMEMBER JESUS' LIFE. JESUS IS WITH US NOW.

#### Wonder centre

Display communion symbols (chalice, plate with roll, Bible, globe), the symbol basket with remembrances of Jesus and the remembrance items from the children and leaders.

#### Symbol basket

Place items relating to Jesus' life: a cross, a stone, carpentry tool, fish, and sandal in the basket.

#### Art print

Display *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* by Salvador Dali at child's eye level. This picture can be found in art books at a community library, or on the internet: type the name of the work into any search engine (e.g. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and explore the results.

#### Nametags

Pre-cut cardboard chalice symbols to use as name tags (see Appendix B, p.43). Punch holes and supply yarn to attach tags.

#### Seder

If you choose to have the Seder meal, prepare the Seder plate as described in the meal activity (p.22).

#### Meal — *The Great Feast*

Prepare pita bread and cups of juice for the closing worship.

#### Hymn

Make large print copies of the hymn text *Let us break bread together on our knees* (*The Book of Praise*, #548) for use in worship.

## ii. Gather and begin (10 minutes)

1. Welcome the children and ask them to write their names on the chalice name tags. If some children do not have a remembrance item from home, invite them to draw a picture of someone special whom they remember.
2. Invite children to place remembrance items they brought on the wonder table.
3. Gather around the wonder table. Invite the children, leaders/helpers to explain the remembrance items. Talk about the symbol basket items (cross, stone, chalice, bread) that remind us of Jesus.

## iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

1. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).  
Leader: The Lord be with you  
Children: And also with you.
2. In preparation for hearing the story, instruct the children to close their eyes and picture themselves in the story. Encourage them to see, hear, smell, and feel the action.
3. Read the story "The Last Supper" from *The Family Story Bible*, p.246, or from Matthew 26:17-30.
4. Discuss the story. Ask, "As you heard the story, what did you see? What was the colour of clothing? What did the walls and floor look like? Were there any windows? What sounds did you hear? I wonder what and how they ate since no cutlery was used. What do you think the disciples and Jesus talked about before Jesus broke the bread? I wonder how Jesus was feeling."

## iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)

Choose learning activities that are suitable for your group. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A large group with enough leaders may offer several activities.

### Drama (suitable for all ages)

1. Dramatize the Lord's Supper. Use a box for a table, or a cloth on the floor, blocks or wooden pieces to represent the bread and cups. Provide cloth and scarves for costumes. A reader can narrate the story using *The Family Story Bible* or the Bible (Matthew 26:17-30). Imagine that others are in the house, a family with children who are curious about what's happening in the upper room. What would they see and hear?
2. Dramatize events in Jesus' life. Lead the children in recalling incidents in the life of Jesus (born in Bethlehem, went to temple when he was 12, healed those who were sick, saw Zacchaeus in a tree). Be sure that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are on the list.
3. Invite the children to form groups of two or three. Each group may choose one event to dramatize or to pantomime. After allowing time for preparation, invite each team to perform or to pantomime, asking others to identify the event portrayed.

### Art (suitable for all ages)

If you have a file of teaching pictures in your congregation, ask the children to look at events from Jesus' life and ministry. Include the crucifixion and resurrection. Pick one of the following activities:

1. Make a remembrance mobile or tree. This cooperative project concludes with one mobile to be used in the closing worship. It may then be placed in the congregation's worship area on a communion Sunday.
  - Invite each child to pick one story or event to illustrate on a cardboard symbol of a chalice or loaf of bread. Use markers, coloured pencils, or crayons to illustrate.
  - Write a few words describing the illustration on the back of the symbol.
  - Punch holes in the symbols. Using string or yarn, attach to a coat hanger, branch, or small tree such as an apartment-sized Christmas tree.
  - Create a sign "We remember Jesus". On the sign include a picture of Jesus found in recycled curriculum material. Attach the sign to the mobile.
  - Place in the worship area.

2. Make memory mandalas. Mandala, or 'centre', is a revived ancient art form created to tell about a person's life. It is used in this lesson to remind children of Jesus' life.
  - Prepare cardboard circles (12" diameter or use the cardboard from pizza purchases).
  - Instruct children to divide the circle into four equal pie shaped sections (first into halves, then into quarters). Older children may divide their Mandala into eighths. Use pencils for accuracy, then markers to trace the correct lines. If required, assist younger children with this task.
  - Provide a picture of Jesus from old curriculum materials/church publications to place in the centre of each mandala.
  - Using the list developed in brainstorming, invite the children to draw four different pictures or symbols that remind them of events in Jesus' life, one in each pie section. Children may take their mandalas home to remind them of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

### **Meal (suitable for all ages)**

This activity involves learning about the Seder, the Passover meal celebrated by Jesus as he remembered God's mighty acts. Excellent children's books about the Passover story are available in the children's section of public libraries. *The Story of Passover* by Bobbi Katz (New York: Random House, 1996) is a paperback book with clear illustrations and a helpful description of the Seder meal.

#### **Preparation**

Arrange in five sections on a large platter:

- bitter herbs (horseradish): bitter reminder of slavery
- parsley, dipped in salt water: reminder of shed tears
- lamb bone (or other bone): reminder of the Old Testament practice of animal sacrifice
- charoset (pronounced 'haroseth' — a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, and grape juice), a reminder of the mortar (cement) slaves spread between the bricks in Pharaoh's cities
- egg (hard boiled): symbol of new life.

Place a small bowl of salted water on the table. Read a brief story written for children about the Passover meal, "The Hebrews Leave Egypt" in *The Family Story Bible*, pages 81-83.

Describe the items on the Seder plate. Remind the children that once a year Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with his family and his disciples. In this way they remembered God's love for their ancestors. Invite the children to name a food or a special meal that they associate with a person or an event (birthday cake, holiday baking, a particular food when a relative visits). On the night before he was crucified, Jesus had a meal with his friends. At that meal, he told them to eat bread and drink wine to remember him.

Enjoy the Seder meal together.

### **v. Respond in worship (5-10 minutes — Modify if necessary)**

1. Quiet recorded music can be used to summon the children to the worship time. Bring communion symbols, remembrance items, pita and juice to the wonder table. Place the Seder plate on the table, mandalas around the table, and the remembrance mobile/tree near the worship area.
2. After all are seated, teach the hymn *Let us break bread together on our knees* (*The Book of Praise*, #548). Distribute large print copies of the words. Explain that the song is an African-American spiritual, sung by slaves working on farms 150 years ago. (If the Seder meal activity was used, remind the children that Jesus' ancestors worked long hours as slaves in Egypt.) Invite children to softly tap the rhythm on their thighs as they sing. The tune is easy to learn. Sing unaccompanied or play the melody line on a keyboard or piano.
3. Light the candle in the centre of the worship table and say, "This is a special, prayerful time to think about Jesus."
4. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).  
 Leader: The Lord be with you.  
 Children: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Children: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

5. Sing the hymn *Let us break bread together on our knees* (*The Book of Praise*, #548).

6. Share a meal (*The Great Feast*).

Leader: While we eat this bread and drink this juice, let's remember that long ago, Jesus was with his friends and told them to remember him when they ate bread and drank wine.

Leader: As you take a piece of bread I invite you to say one thing you remember about Jesus. I remember Jesus when....

Leader: Before you drink the juice, I invite you to say the words, "Thank you, Jesus, for your love."

7. Ask the children to stand, hold hands and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731).

8. Extinguish the candle.

9. Name each child and say, "May God's peace be with you." Assist children in gathering remembrances and art/symbols to take home.

It is important to read the explanation of administration of communion found on p.4.



# Lesson

# 4

## Communion: an act of Thanksgiving and Praise

### A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

#### i. Main idea

Communion is praise to God and thanksgiving for God's gifts.

#### ii. Foundational biblical texts

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. (Psalm 50:14)

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; God's steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 118:1)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)

#### iii. Background for leaders and helpers

Communion is an opportunity to express thanks for all God's good gifts. In the great prayer of thanksgiving, the worship leader gives thanks to God for creation, the gift of life, God's faithfulness to humankind, saving grace in Christ, hope of eternal life, and the living presence of Jesus.

Since the beginning of the second century, the Greek word 'eucharist' has been used as a name for the sacrament of communion. In translation it means "thanksgiving." In the New Testament the Greek words for 'thanksgiving' and 'bless' are related in meaning. Both words are linked to the Hebrew word *berekah* that refers to a traditional Jewish blessing. Since it was used at the Seder, Jesus probably used this blessing at the Last Supper: *Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.*

In the Bible, thanksgiving is more than speaking words of gratitude. It is an attitude toward life itself. The coined word 'thanksgiving' expresses the full sense of "eucharist." In Ephesians we read: "Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:18-20) Being thankful is a stance taken toward the past, present, and future. It is expressed in acts of devotion, prayer, and song, and through acts of care, giving, and sharing. Dag Hammarsjold wonderfully expressed the spirit of thanksgiving in his journal *Markings* (1964, Faber & Faber LTD) when he wrote, "For all that has been, thanks. To all that will be, yes!"

#### iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea**, **foundational biblical texts**, and **background for teachers and leaders**.
2. Remember your childhood. How did you learn to say thank you? How did your family show gratitude? How did you celebrate Thanksgiving? How did your church family show thankfulness and praise? Were you involved?

3. Recall your current experiences in church. How does your church family show praise and thankfulness?
4. Read "Holy Communion", *Living Faith*, 7.7.4 and 7.7.5.
5. Read **hear the story** and related scriptures, and choose the story to read to the children.
6. Read Psalms 145 and 150.
7. Pray thankfully for the children, your time together, and for each other.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Main idea poster

Prepare a poster with the words

IN COMMUNION WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR ALL GOOD GIFTS.

#### Wonder table

Place the communion symbols (see Appendix B, p.43) and the empty symbol basket on the table. Wrap several small boxes each containing a magazine picture or drawing of God's gifts (e.g. a tree, flower, water, animals, Jesus, nurse, apple, carrot, acts of kindness or helping). Place these on the table.

#### Symbol basket

These will be filled during the gathering activity.

#### Name tags

Pre-cut cardboard circle symbols. Punch holes for yarn or supply safety pins.

#### Art Print

Display and talk about *The Angelus* by Jean Francois Millet or find a painting that conveys wonder about God's gifts. A contemporary print that reflects thanks and praise is Norman Rockwell's *Saying Grace*, the cover of the *Post* magazine in 1951. This picture can be found in art books containing Rockwell's illustrations or on the internet.

#### Meal — *The Great Feast*

Prepare fresh apple slices and bread or pretzels on plates for the closing worship. Pretzels from the pretzel-making activity in this session may be used.

#### Gather and begin (10 minutes; choose activities to suit your group's needs)

Welcome children and make name tags. Tell children that the circle is a symbol for God's never-ending presence with us. Invite children to write their names, the word "Thanks!" and decorate the circles. Use yarn for wearing the tags or attach with a safety pin.

1. Read the theme poster words.
2. Discuss the art print and items on the wonder table.
3. Ask children to open the small parcels to discover some of God's good gifts. Put these "gifts" into the symbol basket.
4. Children may think about things for which they are thankful, then draw or describe these things on an index card. Remind them that acts of kindness are also God's gifts. Decorate with heart or smiley face stickers or crayons. Place cards into the symbol basket.

### iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

In preparation for the story, sing the last 13 bars of Psalm 113 in *The Book of Praise*: "From the rising up of the sun may the Lord be praised, praise to the name of the Lord." Repeat several times.

1. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

You may want to invite the children to close their eyes during the reading of the story and imagine what they see, hear and smell as they pretend to be in the story.

2. Choose one of the following to read:

a) The story of Jesus and the 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Explain that leprosy is a skin disease. Some types of leprosy are contagious. People with leprosy in biblical times had to live away from their families and towns until a priest declared them to be “clean”. Many people were afraid and unkind. The people with leprosy felt lonely and unloved. (Look in a Bible dictionary for additional information.) Explain that a Samaritan was a stranger, a foreigner, not liked by people in the area. The other nine lepers were probably Jewish like Jesus.) Discuss the story. Say, “If you had been alive in Jesus’ day, I wonder how it would feel if your mother had had leprosy. What diseases today make people feel lonely and unloved? Why do you think only one person came back to say thank you to Jesus? I wonder how Jesus felt.”

b) Jesus and the Children, *The Family Story Bible*, pp.232-233 or Matthew 19:13-15. Discuss the story. Say, “I wonder how the children felt about being pushed away from Jesus? What would you say to Jesus if you were there? I wonder what Jesus talked about with the children.”

#### **iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)**

Choose activities that are suitable for your situation. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A large group with enough leaders may offer several activities.

##### **Drama (suitable for all ages)**

1. Dramatize the story of the lepers and Jesus or the story of Jesus and the children. Have props suitable for the story. Include a long, narrow cloth or paper for the road, scarves, cloths for bandages, material for costumes.
2. Dramatize acts of thanksgiving. Some examples are: sharing food with someone who has forgotten a lunch at school, being a friend to one who is laughed at or bullied, helping a younger brother or sister with homework, giving away your book or toy to someone who has none.
3. Pantomime acts of kindness with a partner and let others guess the act.

##### **Art (suitable for all ages)**

Talk about gifts of God. Read Corinthians 13 noting that the best gift is love.

1. Make symbols of love: heart, chalice, bread, and cross (see Appendix B, p.43). Children may create their own symbol. Model symbols using clay, play-dough, papier-mâché or other pliable material that will dry hard, or cut thin cardboard to form symbols. Decorate with caring words: love, Jesus, thank you. Punch a hole in the top centre. Thread a ribbon through the hole to hang the symbol. This can be taken home or hung on a Thank You branch or wire mobile. Remember to take the gift home to give away.
2. Make gifts of love or kindness to give to a family member or friend. Draw or write the gift on a piece of paper. Place the paper in a small box and wrap the box with handmade or commercial wrapping paper. Tie yarn or ribbon around the box. Remember to take the gift home to give away.
3. Make thank you placemats using the words of thanks written by the children in the Gathering Time. Glue the cards on a larger sheet of coloured cardboard or construction paper. A mealtime prayer may be glued on, too. With a leader’s help, cover front and back with transparent adhesive sheets. Trim the edges. The prayers or thanksgiving words can be used in the closing worship.
4. Make musical instruments to praise and thank God.
  - Rhythm sticks — Cut and sand 30mm doweling into 20cm lengths. To use, strike two dowels gently together in rhythm.
  - Strikers — Tie twine onto one end of a large nail and strike with the other large nail.
  - Rhythm blocks — Glue coarse sandpaper onto the sides of two wooden blocks sized to fit into a child’s hands. Rub hands together to make a sound.

- Drums — Decorate large coffee tins with plastic lids by gluing cloth around the can. Tap the lids gently with fingers.
- Shakers — Pour sand in small empty plastic bottles and tighten the tops. Shaking gently produces a soft, pleasant sound.

## Music (suitable for all ages)

Choose from the following. If your group made instruments, play them while singing.

### 1. Praise the Lord (to the tune of *Edelweiss*)

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,  
Praise the Lord, Hallelujah;  
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,  
Praise the Lord, Hallelujah.

#### CHORUS

Praise the Lord, Hallelujah  
Praise the Lord, Hallelujah;  
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,  
Praise the Lord, Hallelujah.

### 2. *For all your goodness, God (The Book of Praise, #804)*. This hymn can be used as a meal grace. Sing as a round. Print the words to send home with the children.

## Meal (suitable for all ages)

Choose the appropriate activity for your group.

1. Make pretzels. Pretzels symbolize praying hands that are used to give God thanks and praise in spoken or silent prayer. The original German pretzel was made for Lent without eggs, milk, and butter. Use refrigerated breadstick or biscuit mix dough. Biscuit dough can be mixed at home. After washing hands, children can knead lumps of dough, then roll into long snakes, 1/4 inch wide. Cut dough into 10" pieces and shape into pretzels. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Brush with butter and sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake at 425 for 10 minutes. Cool before eating.
2. Talk about giving thanks before a meal. Ask children to offer the prayers they say or sing at family meals. Decide on a short prayer to pray or sing in the closing worship. Write the words on newsprint. The hymn *For all your goodness, God (The Book of Praise, #804)* could be introduced here also.

## v. Respond in worship (5-10 minutes — Modify if necessary)

1. Invite children to bring items from the wonder table to the worship table. Include the symbol basket of gifts and plates of fruit and bread or pretzels. Play worshipful recorded music or have the children with instruments sing *Praise the Lord* or *For all your goodness, God (The Book of Praise, #804)*. Find spots on mats around the table. Place placemats on the floor. Light the candle to signal the beginning.
2. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).  
Leader: The Lord be with you.  
Children: And also with you.  
Leader: Lift up your hearts.  
Children: We lift them up to the Lord.  
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
3. For grace, sing *For all your goodness, God (The Book of Praise, #804)* or use a prayer prepared in a learning activity.
4. Share a meal (*The Great Feast*). As the plate of bread or pretzels is passed, invite each child to say "I am thankful for...." As the second plate of fruit is passed, each may say "Thank you, God, for Jesus."
5. Close with *Shalom chaverim (The Book of Praise, #731)*.
6. Extinguish the candle and quietly rise.
7. Name each child and say "May God's love be with you."

# Lesson

# 5

## Communion: an act of Worldwide Celebration

### A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

#### i. Main idea

In communion, Christians around the world celebrate and share God's love.

#### ii. Foundational biblical texts

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29)

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16)

#### ii. Background for leaders and helpers

The church began to grow when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples as Jesus had promised (Acts 1:8). "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Pentecost, a Jewish festival occurring 50 days after Passover, marked the beginning of the offering of the first fruits. People traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate this pilgrim feast as they had done for Passover. When the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak the "good news" in the varied languages of the people gathered during Pentecost, many heard, believed, and were baptized in Jesus' name. Pentecost is often called the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit as God's personal and powerful presence in the world continues to call believers and unites human beings with what God has done in Jesus Christ.

The Church universal is described in "God's Church", *Living Faith*, 7.1-7.1.4: the Church is Christ, together with his people, called both to worship and to serve him in all of life. The Church is one family under God, whose purpose it is to unite all people in Jesus Christ. The Church is holy: it is set apart by God, through the Holy Spirit, called by Christ for the sake of the world. The Church is catholic: it is universal, including all people of all time who affirm the Christian faith.

World Communion Sunday provides an opportunity for churches to recognize that Christians around the world, representing many traditions, share bread and wine at the Lord's table. It is an expression of the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer that the Church be one. Children are aware of the world's different cultures, peoples, and news events. Sharing the Lord's Supper with all God's children on World Communion Sunday is a means of bringing about God's peaceable kingdom on earth.

### iii. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea, foundational biblical texts and background for leaders and helpers**.
2. Read “Holy Communion” (7.7.2), “The Church” (7.1-7.1.6), “Worship” (7.3.2-7.3.4) and “Ministry” (7.2.1) in *Living Faith*.
3. Discuss or recall past experiences of World Communion Sunday worship. What did you learn? Did you feel a “oneness” with others? What décor, symbols, or special food do you recall?
4. Read **hear the story** in the lesson plan and the related scriptures. Choose the story to read in class.
5. Pray or sing together *In Christ there is no east or west* (*The Book of Praise*, #480).
6. Planning: Your minister can provide information about World Communion Sunday. Invite people in your church family to help by
  - offering of food, costumes, or items representative of other cultures;
  - describing church life in their country of origin;
  - singing a hymn or praying in another language;
  - corresponding with missionaries serving abroad who would share their worship experience.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Theme poster

Prepare a poster using a world map as the background. On the map, print the words: Christians around the world share in the Lord’s Supper. Add pictures of people from different countries.

To help children understand the universality of Christian worship, find multicultural pictures of people and churches from mission magazines, Presbyterian calendars, and *Presbyterian Record*. Mount on cardboard and display.

#### Wonder table

Include communion symbols and items representing various countries (e.g. wooden shoes, international dolls, stamps) and the symbol basket. Cover the table with a red cloth to symbolize Pentecost and the birth of the church.

#### Symbol basket

Write the words *Dieu* (French for ‘God’), *Gott* (German for ‘God’), *Yahweh* (Hebrew for ‘God’) and the sentence *Dios te ama* (Spanish for ‘God loves you’) on index cards. Find pictures or make cardboard symbols of Pentecost: flames and a dove (see Appendix B, p.43). Place cards, pictures and symbols in the symbol basket.

#### World nametags

Provide pre-cut cardboard circle shapes and invite the children to print their first name and draw flame outlines symbolizing Pentecost and the Holy Spirit on the circle.

#### Art print

Display an art print or other illustration of a family meal in another culture. *Tamalada* (Making Tamales) by Carmen Lomas Garza (*Imaging the Word*, United Church Press, 1995, p.174) is a print of The Last Supper with a family preparing tamales. Another is *All Creatures Celebrate* by Hildegard of Bingen (*Imaging the Word*, Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1955, p.264).

#### Preparing the meal

Assemble pictures of different kinds of bread used by people around the world. Obtain samples of a variety of bread. Include leavened and unleavened bread.

Prepare bread-making ingredients and utensils for the bread-making activity. The bread will be used in the closing worship.

## ii. Gather and begin (10 minutes)

1. Welcome children and assist with name tags.
2. Invite children to read the theme poster, examine items on the wonder table, and view other décor.
3. Make paper people chains from colourful paper. Decorate the 7"-8" paper people. Make enough to link hands forming a paper chain around the worship table symbolizing the many people of the world at the Lord's Table.  
Making people chains — Cut half figures on each side of the accordion folds of coloured construction paper leaving the hands joined in the middle (like paper doll cut-outs). Teachers and helpers need to help with this activity.

## iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

Repeat and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you

Leader: Today we are going to hear two stories. The first story tells of the Church's birth when people from different countries, speaking different languages, came together and heard about Jesus. Many believed and were baptized. The second story describes the first Christians.

1. Read "Birthday of the Church", *The Family Story Bible* p.269-270 (Acts 2).
2. Also read "Sharing the story of how the early Church lived together," p.271, *The Family Story Bible* (Acts 4:32 - 5:11).

Lead a discussion with these statements and questions: I wonder what people heard at Pentecost. How is the Holy Spirit described? I wonder what you would have thought if you had been there. What did Peter tell the people to do? I wonder why people began meeting in groups for worship.

## iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)

Choose activities that are suitable for your group. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A larger group with more leaders/helpers may offer several activities running simultaneously.

### Drama (suitable for all ages)

1. Dramatize the Pentecost story. Some children can be disciples; others are visitors from different countries. For costumes, make sandals by cutting out cardboard soles sized to a child's shoe. Attach the cardboard soles onto shoes with two large elastics. Provide cloths, sheets, scarves as well as short ropes and thick yarn to tie on the headbands. Portray the presence of the Holy Spirit using a wind sound and moving streamers. A reader can narrate the story.
2. Make up short skits telling others about Jesus.
  - a) Say, "Pretend you live in the times of Jesus. You're 9 years old and have heard your parents talking about Jesus, his life, death and resurrection. You want to tell your friends about what you've heard. Use scarves, cloth, and sandals for costumes."
  - b) Say, "Make up a skit about life today. Imagine that a new family moves in next door and they're invited to your home for a meal. They see your Bible and ask what it is. They don't know about Jesus. Each member of your family tells something they know about Jesus."
3. For younger ages, act out the story on a tabletop. Wooden blocks and plain wooden figures along with scraps of fabric, pipe cleaners, Popsicle sticks, twigs, rocks, and plastiscene can be used to construct the Pentecost scene in a large box top which has edges. Plastiscene is sufficient to hold Popsicle sticks or other items in place. Ask children how to portray the Holy Spirit.

## Art (suitable for all ages)

Choose from the following activities:

1. Make a mobile on a wire coat hanger.
  - Cut out magazine faces of people of different ages, gender, and ethnic backgrounds.
  - Glue faces to both sides of construction paper circles about 6" in diameter.
  - Punch holes in the top of the circle and insert yarn.
  - Hang the circles at various lengths from the bottom straight wire of a wire clothes hanger.
  - Cut out chalice and loaf shapes to attach to either side of the other two wires.
  - Finish with a heart shaped piece of cardboard hanging in the middle of the triangular wire shape. Print on the heart: WE SHARE IN GOD'S LOVE.
  - These shapes may be precut but are to be decorated by the children.
  - Display the mobiles in the sanctuary or narthex.
2. Make placemats.
  - Cut out magazine faces as in the mobile #1.
  - Using lightly coloured poster paper, print the words WE SHARE IN GOD'S LOVE at the top of the placemats.
  - Glue the faces onto the placemats with glue sticks.
  - Attach self-adhesive transparent shelf paper to each mat, top and bottom, so mats can be wiped clean.
3. Create pictures or poster for display in the World Communion Service or any communion service.
  - Invite two or three children to work together to make one large poster or individual children to make pictures of a world communion banquet. Use markers, paints, crayons, or another medium (collage of recycled church curriculum and magazine pictures, etc.)
  - Brainstorm images to include in the pictures: communion table, people from different ethnic backgrounds and ages, chalice, plates of different kinds of bread, colourful cloth, a globe or image of the world, symbols related to Jesus (ICHTHUS), Holy Spirit, Pentecost (see Appendix B, p.43)
  - Print a variety of language names for God on the poster: Dios (Spanish), Bog (Russian), Yahweh (Hebrew), Gott (German), Diyin God (Navajo) Bok Kei-dei (Vietnamese).
4. Make a pinwheel as a reminder that the Spirit came like a rushing wind.
  - Recycle a world map by cutting it into 8" squares. Fold square diagonally (4 triangles). Open flat and cut along the diagonal lines 4 1/2" toward the centre,
  - Bring every other point carefully to the centre attaching the four points with a pin through a bead and into a 12" wooden dowel. Do not crease folds.
  - Print the words WE SHARE GOD'S LOVE, one word on each of the four straight blades.
  - Blow like the wind.

## Meal — *The Great Feast* (suitable for all ages)

Church Family Sharing: Members of the congregation share their church stories, food, hymn and a prayer from their home countries. Point out countries on the globe or world map.

(Know children's food allergies before offering food)

Say, "When he was at table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." (Luke 24:30,31a) Show pictures of different kinds of bread used by people around the world. Show the different breads you've been able to assemble noting the leavened and unleavened (*matzoh*) bread. Offer pieces of bread to taste.

Make communion bread from a simple recipe.

- Write the ingredients in large letters so all can read.
- 1c. whole wheat flour, 1 t. baking powder, 1/2-t. salt (remind children that without some salt, flavour is missing), 2T cooking oil, 6T of water. (*Things to Make and Do for Lent and Easter* by Martha Bettie Gee, 1998, Bridge Resources, Louisville, Kentucky.)
- Have utensils and ingredients on a table.



- After children wash their hands, they can take turns measuring and mixing the dough.
- First mix the dry ingredients, and then add the water and oil.
- Put dough in a greased loaf pan and cook at 325 degrees for 12-15 min.
- Share the bread at the closing worship in class or use in the church communion service.

### Music (suitable for all ages)

Choose the hymn best suited for your group. Sing and play instruments.

1. *Holy, holy, holy* (*The Book of Praise*, #303).
  - Print the words on poster board in large letters.
  - Sing this hymn in English, Spanish and French as a reminder of the universality of the Christian faith. Children will learn the non-English words by listening.
  - This hymn is on the CD *Come Know My Joy...Hymns from the Book of Praise* by the singers and players of Beaches Presbyterian Church in Toronto. This CD is an excellent resource for learning hymns accompanied by musical instruments and as background music for quiet worship times. Order from the Book Room at The Presbyterian Church in Canada or Beaches Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ontario.
  - Play handmade drums (coffee tins with plastic lids) or small hand drums softly.
  - Play the melody on a keyboard with one finger.
  - Explain that “holy” means most special and worthy, deserving of our love.
  - Children will understand the reverence of this hymn as they sing it repeatedly.
2. Learn *Let us talents and tongues employ* (*The Book of Praise*, #563). Clapping, moving, and playing instruments enhance this hymn. Print copies of the words or have hymn books for each reader.
3. Sing *I am the church! You are the church!* (*The Book of Praise*, #475). This is an excellent descriptive hymn about the church. Use action signs with the words.

### v. Respond in worship (5-10 minutes — modify if necessary)

1. Choose one of the following to begin worship.
  - a) Invite the children to bring the worship symbols from the wonder table to the worship table. Attach the linked paper people around the table edge with tape or pins. Place the bread and tray of juice on the table. Provide quiet gathering music as all sit on rug mats around the worship table.
  - b) Invite children to walk around the room singing, clapping and playing instruments to the hymn *Let us talents and tongues employ* (*The Book of Praise*, #563). Gather instruments in a basket as quiet music plays and children find their places.
2. Light the candle to signal the beginning. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).
 

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
 Children: And also with you.  
 Leader: Lift up your hearts.  
 Children: We lift them up to the Lord.  
 Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
 Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: Every communion service reminds us that Christians all around the world celebrate and share the Lord’s Supper in many languages, breaking different kinds of bread. We remember Jesus and share the best news the world can hear: God loves us now and forever.
3. Sing *Holy, Holy, Holy* (*The Book of Praise*, #303) or *I am the church! You are the church!* (*The Book of Praise*, #475).
4. Share a meal (*The Great Feast*). As children pass the basket of bread to each other, invite each to say, “I share God’s love with you.” As juice is passed, invite each to say, “Thank you for Jesus.”
5. To close, stand, hold hands and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731).
6. Extinguish the candle.
7. Name each child and say, “May God’s peace go with you.”

# Lesson

# 6

## Communion: an act of Celebrating the Resurrection

### A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

#### i. Main idea

In communion we remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

#### ii. Foundational biblical texts

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25)

When he was at table with them, he took bread and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Luke 24:30-31a)

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. (Acts 2:46)

#### iii. Background for leaders and helpers

In addition to telling the story of Jesus' life and death, communion is a joyful feast, a celebration of the resurrection. Jesus entered the world on a joyous note when the angel announced, "I bring you good news of a great joy for all the people." (Luke 2:10). Jesus bequeathed his joy to the disciples, saying "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15: 11) Joy, partially present in human life, is anticipated in full in God's Kingdom.

During communion our emotions often flow from solemnity to joyous exuberance. People of faith experience the depth of sorrow remembering Jesus' suffering and death. We sing and speak the words of thanksgiving for God's mighty acts, for the work of Jesus Christ, and for the Holy Spirit followed by the proclamation of the mystery of faith. Sorrow is lifted as Jesus' life and strength flow through God's household. Those who have come gladly to Christ's table rejoice once again in his resurrection and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.

As children and adults experience together the passion and depth of meaning present in the joyful mystery, the Lord's Supper, "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love" unites the household of God. Nourished in love and with praise and thanksgiving, the church family joyfully goes out into the world proclaiming Jesus as Living Lord, hope for a troubled age.

#### iv. Reflection activities for leaders and helpers

1. Read the **main idea**, **foundational biblical texts**, and **background**.
2. Read "Our Hope in God", *Living Faith*, section 10.
3. Reflect. How was resurrection joy demonstrated in your childhood church experiences? Did the mood at communion affect your thoughts and feelings about Jesus? As a child, what did you understand about the resurrection of Jesus? Do the children in your congregation

- experience joy and hope when they take part or observe adults in communion? What could be done to increase the sense of resurrection joy during the Lord's Supper?
4. Read **hear the story** and related scriptures.
  5. Read Psalm 146.
  6. Pray: "God of all our joy, thank you for the bread of life; help us celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with all your children." Pray spoken or silent prayers naming the teachers, helpers and children as travelers who nurture each other along the faith journey.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Main idea poster

Prepare a poster with the words

IN COMMUNION WE CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

#### Symbol basket

Place a cocoon, butterfly (pictures, or illustration), apple or any fruit with seeds sectioned, a flower bulb, an egg, any symbols representing new life, into the symbol basket with a printed sign: CELEBRATE NEW LIFE.

#### Wonder table

Display communion symbols (chalice, plate with roll, Bible, and globe) along with the filled symbol basket. Cover the table with a green cloth symbolizing hope and life. Choose from the following books that prompt wonder and awe and remind viewers that we "know only in part" (I Cor.13: 12-13).

- *Signs of God's Love* by Jeanne Fogle (Geneva Press, 1984)
- *Take Another Look* by Tana Hoban, 1981 (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1981 — from your community library)
- *What's it? Creatures, Plants, Nature's Oddities and More*, 1989 and *What's it? Gadgets, Objects, Machines and More*, 1988. Both books from OWL magazine are published by Grey de Pencier Books, Toronto, ON.
- *Snow Crystals* by W.A. Bentley & W.J. Humphreys (New York: Dover Pub. 1962). Snow is more than it appears to be. 2,453 illustrations of photographed snowflakes, no two alike, are wonders of God.

#### Art prints

- *Supper at Emmaus* by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio c.1600, National Gallery of Art, London, England (Nimatallah/Art Resource, N.Y.) in *Imaging the Word Vol. 2*, p.190, Susan Blain, Editor, United Church Press, Cleveland, Ohio. Read Luke 24:35 as you view this painting: "Then they told me what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."
- *Wildly Dancing Children* by Emil Nolde p.201. *Imaging the Word* illustrates colourful and joyful life abounding because Jesus lives.
- Find recycled church school curriculum for illustrations of the road to Emmaus story or Jesus' post-resurrection appearances with his disciples.

#### Meal — *The Great Feast*

Prepare fruit pieces and pita bread for sharing in the closing worship. Fold napkins.

Options: prayer net, labyrinth (see p.8)

### ii. Gather and begin (10-15 minutes)

1. Talk about items on the wonder table and look at the "wonder" books.
2. Cut open apples or other fruit and take out the seeds. Examine the cocoon, butterfly and bulb.

3. Cut out pictures of seeds, flowers, or fruit from gardening catalogues. Find pictures representing new life (baby animals, infants). Glue pictures onto shelf paper long enough to be used as the worship table covering for the closing worship. Add printed words of celebration (e.g. Alleluia, YES, Christ is RISEN, Love) and joyful pictures drawn with crayons and markers.

### iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

Say, "Prepare for the story by closing your eyes and entering into Bible times. Think of a dusty road on a hot day. People are sad and discouraged. You may listen with your eyes opened or closed."

Read: "On the Road to Emmaus" (Luke 24: 13-35) in *The Family Story Bible* (p.260-261).

Ask and wonder: I wonder how it felt to walk on the road. What did you feel, see, or hear in the story? How do sad people walk? I wonder why the walkers didn't recognize Jesus. Recall the conversation. Hospitality in Jesus' time meant that a stranger has a place to stay and food to eat. Usually the women and girls fixed and served the meals. You can imagine that they were there. When did the hosts know who the stranger was? I wonder how we would have felt if we had been there for supper?

### iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)

Choose activities suitable for your group. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A larger group with several leaders/helpers may offer several activities.

#### Drama (suitable for all ages)

Choose an activity suitable for your children.

1. Children dramatize the road to Emmaus and supper with Cleopas, friends, and family. Provide costumes: robes, scarves, towels, sheets and yarn or strips of cloth for tying headscarves. Represent the long road to Emmaus by using long paper or sheets to walk along. Have props for the supper such as cardboard pieces, wood for bread. There were many people on the Emmaus road so more than three children may be in this drama. Also include women and children on the road and fixing the meal. To remember the story, an older child may read from *The Family Bible Book* or Luke 24:13-3.
2. Table top drama. Children dramatize the story in a large carton box top with edges about four inches high. Make the sandy road to Emmaus in two inches of sand with rocks and twigs alongside. Use wooden blocks, cardboard pieces, wooden figures, play-dough, or plasticine. A small box in a corner can be the house where Jesus was invited in for supper and where his identity was revealed in the breaking of bread.
3. Create hand puppets from paper bags or socks. Using markers draw faces on the bags or socks representing the people on the Emmaus road. Decorate. Say, "Pretend your puppet is walking along the road with others. Have conversation about the events that recently occurred in Jerusalem and about who Jesus is and what he did and said."

#### Art (suitable for all ages)

Supplies needed are in bold print.

1. Paint to music. Say, "Listen to music that celebrates the resurrected Jesus. Think about the disciples' surprise and happiness when Jesus broke bread and they realized that the stranger was actually Jesus, alive! Paint what you feel and see in your mind's eye." Choose **music** that conveys celebration. On a **tape or CD player**, play, repeatedly, a hymn, section of the Handel's Messiah etc. **Paint** with fingers or brushes. Provide **old shirts** for paint smocks and water in a basin for clean up. Display paintings under the heading, IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD, JESUS IS WITH US.
2. Create "magic writing" (leader supervision required). Fill an **old fountain pen** with **lemon juice** or use **q-tips, small paint brushes, quill or pen points** dipped in **lemon juice**. Print

HE HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN TO THEM IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD (Luke 24:35) on white paper. Next, hold the paper close to a warm light bulb and observe the result. Be careful not to hold the paper too close to the bulb or it will burn. Be amazed at what appears.

3. Create pictures to remember the story. Say, "There were no cameras in Bible times to instantly record events. Pretend you're a child living in the house in Emmaus and you have looked through cracks in the wall to see what's going on. You have **paper** and a few **pencils and crayons**. Draw a picture of Jesus breaking bread at the table with Cleopas and the other disciple."

### **Music (suitable for all ages)**

1. Sing *I danced in the morning/Lord of the Dance* (*The Book of Praise*, #250). This song tells the story of Jesus as the Lord of the dance, "Life". The chorus is learned quickly. Non-readers will enjoy listening to the story verses and being able to sing the chorus. Musical instruments, clapping and dancing add to the spirit of this hymn but sing the 4th verse slower with sadness and no instruments and then the 5th with joyful sound.
2. Sing *In the bulb there is a flower* (*The Book of Praise*, #674). This hymn is about the promise of new life and the mystery of the unseen. Teach the first verse by making a picture poster with line drawings for the objects: bulb, flower, seed, apple tree, etc and inserting the words in between. Play music on a keyboard or piano. The tune is easy to learn. If no instruments are available, ask a pianist to make a tape for class use.

### **v. Respond in worship (10 minutes — Modify if necessary)**

1. Invite children to cover the table with the decorated covering and bring worship symbols from the wonder table to the worship table. Include the Bible, chalice, and plates with pita bread and fruit. Play quiet music while children find places to sit around the table.
2. Light the candle to signal the beginning of worship. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).  
Leader: The Lord be with you.  
Children: And also with you.  
Leader: Lift up your hearts.  
Children: We lift them up to the Lord.  
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord.  
Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: In communion we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, his coming back to life from death. This is a great mystery that only God understands. We give God thanks and praise for life and we try to love in the way that Jesus taught us.

3. Sing *In the bulb there is a flower* (*The Book of Praise*, #674).
4. Share a meal — *The Great Feast*  
Say, "Keep your bread in your hand (or on napkin) until after we've said the worship words. Let's practice what we will say: I'll say 'Christ is risen'. And you will respond: 'He is risen in deed'. Let's begin." Pass the pita around the circle. Each person takes a piece.  
Leader: Christ is risen.  
Children: He is risen indeed.  
All eat together. Pass the fruit bowl; each takes a piece and holds it until the words have been said.  
Leader: Christ is risen.  
Children: He is risen indeed.  
All eat together. Sing the chorus of *I danced in the morning/Lord of the Dance* (*The Book of Praise*, #250).
5. To close, ask children to stand and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731).
6. Extinguish the candle.
7. Name each child followed by "May God's love go with you."

# Lesson

# 7

## Communion: an act of Nourishment

### A. Introduction to the Lesson Theme

#### i. Main idea

In communion we are fed and nourished, equipped and energized, to live faithfully in God's way.

#### ii. Foundational biblical texts

These all look up to you to give them their food in due season; when you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. (Psalm 104:27-28)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." (Matthew 14:16)

O taste and see that the Lord is good.... (Psalm 34: 8a)

#### iii. Background for leaders

Just as we need to eat nutritious food to strengthen our physical bodies, we need the spiritual food offered at the Lord's Supper. At the Lord's table the faithful are nourished by all that Jesus is, said, and did. The grace effective in the sacraments comes not from any power in them but from the work of the Holy Spirit (*Living Faith*, 7.5.3). The presence of the Holy Spirit is seen in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, loyalty, gentleness, and self-control, (*Living Faith*, 4.3.3). Eating the bread and drinking the wine of communion enables people of faith to be renewed and energized, to go out to be the body of Christ caring for the world.

We all must be fed or we die. In our society there are many choices to make about the food we eat. We can eat nutritious food promoting good health and wellness or consume junk food that fills our stomachs but does not nourish. What we eat is a reflection of who we are and whose we are. Just as a change of heart is needed to change daily eating habits, so a change of heart is needed to turn from the world's way to Jesus' way.

Children are dependent upon adults for nourishment. They trust their caregivers to give them healthy food that enables wellness and growth. They also depend upon adults to nurture their hearts and spirits. Children need to be nourished with the goodness that comes from God: a name, an identity and the wonders of creation, the stories of Jesus, faith taught and experienced. All these are affirmed at the Lord's Supper. Through communion children share the feast that he has prepared and taste and see that the Lord is good.

#### iv. Reflection activities for teachers and helpers

1. Read the **main idea**, **foundational biblical texts**, and **background**.

2. Consider and discuss the following questions:

- What was your understanding about food when you were a child?
- How has your faith affected your eating habits?
- How does eating at the Lord's Table nourish you?
- Consider the children in your class. What challenges do they face around food issues?

3. The Holy Spirit enables the nourishment of the Lord's Supper to empower us for faithful service. Read "The Holy Spirit Forms and Equips the Church", *Living Faith*, 4.3 - 4.3.5.
4. Read "Holy Communion", *Living Faith*, 7.7.
5. Read the communion hymn *You satisfy the hungry heart* (*The Book of Praise*, #538).
6. Pray for your co-leaders and/or the children in your class.

## B. Lesson Plan

### i. Prepare

#### Main idea poster

Prepare a poster with the words IN COMMUNION WE ARE FED AND NOURISHED.

#### Name tags

Provide construction paper for the children to make their own fruit-shaped name tags or cut them before class. Supply yarn or safety pins.

#### Symbol baskets

- Items representing five food groups: bread, vegetable, fruit, milk, and meat. Display these items in baggies: crackers, carrot, apple, cheese, beans or nuts.
- Grapes, bread, a *Chi Rho* (pronounced 'k-eye row' — see Appendix B, p.43) and a dove (symbolizing the Holy Spirit) to represent the spiritual food of communion.
- Nine cardboard fruit shapes with the name of a fruit of the spirit written on each one. The nine fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

#### Wonder table

Place on the table communion symbols (globe, chalice, plate with roll, Bible, opened to Galatians 5:22), the filled symbol basket (see above), and a picture of Jesus with the children found in recycled curriculum materials or in a Bible for children.

#### Art print

Display *The Moorish Kitchen Maid* by Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez, from *Imagining the Word*, p.191, United Church Press, 1995. This picture tells the Emmaus story of a young woman being "fed" by listening to the words of the mysterious guest, the resurrected Jesus. Look for other art that reflects the mystery of being nourished by the Word.

#### Meal — *The Great Feast*

Prepare fruit pieces for the closing worship. Put crackers or muffin halves on a second plate. Options: prayer net, labyrinth (see p.8)

### ii. Gather and begin (10 minutes)

1. Welcome children and invite them to make or write on a fruit-shaped nametag.
2. Invite children to examine the items on the wonder table. Point out Galatians 5:22 in the Bible.
3. Talk about the art print. Invite children to use the prayer net.
4. Ask children to cut out pictures of nutritious food (guided by the five food groups) from grocery store ads. Place these in the symbol basket.

### iii. Hear the story (10 minutes)

The time machine activity could be used to prepare for listening to the story. (See p.8)

1. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).  
 Leader: The Lord be with you.  
 Children: And also with you.

Leader: Communion is about taking good things into ourselves so that we will be healthy in mind, body, and spirit. Our spirit is that part of each of us that never dies. It's the special you made by God. God's Holy Spirit guides and nourishes our spirits with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22). Jesus taught people to live with these qualities.

2. Choose one of the following two stories:

- a) Read "Martha Learns about Food," *The Family Story Bible*, p.222-223 (Luke 10:38-42). Say, "I wonder what Martha was preparing for the meal. Why didn't Mary help Martha? I wonder what Jesus and Mary talked about. What 'food' did Jesus talk about with Mary? What happens in your family when friends come for a meal and a visit? I wonder what food can be prepared quickly in one pot or bowl so everyone has time to visit together."
- b) Read "Things Jesus Said," (Luke 6:27-35), p.192, *The Family Story Bible* Ralph Milton, Westminster John Knox Press. Milton explains the spiritual food that Jesus was talking about with Mary and Martha. Say, "I wonder how the people and the disciples felt as they listened to these words of Jesus. What does it mean to be a bright light? What did Jesus say that is hard for us to do? I wonder what things are bad for our body, mind (thinking) and spirit (feeling)? [Children know about drugs, unkind words that belittle and hurt, and bullying. Help them to express these thoughts.] Let's name the "food" that is good for our mind...our spirit...our body." Thank each child for his or her comments.

#### **iv. Explore the theme (20-25 minutes)**

Choose activities that are suitable for your group. A small group with one teacher may do one activity. A large group with extra leaders may offer several activities.

##### **Drama (suitable for any age)**

1. Dramatize the Mary/Martha story. Use cardboard and cloth to make the walls of the house. Cloth or ropes on the floor set the boundaries for indoor and outdoor space. Provide cloth and scarves for costumes, utensils and a bowl for food. Besides Mary, Martha, and Jesus, the children could pretend that Lazarus (the brother) and neighbour children are around, outside the house. Older children could be playing with younger children. Lazarus may be working outside in the field or making furniture.
2. Act out a contemporary situation. Ask children to imagine that Jesus, needing rest and food, drops in to visit his good friends: you, your family and friends. What food is offered? What good words about living God's way does Jesus share with you? (Remember Jesus knows about today's world and problems.) Set the "stage" with a dining room/meal props.
3. Dramatize a "fruit of the Spirit". Take the nine paper fruits from the symbol basket. Give one to each child or couple of children. Invite them to dramatize a scene describing their word — joy, patience, etc. Suggest pantomime so others can guess the word or create speaking parts in a scene.

##### **Art (suitable for all ages)**

1. Make a vitamin capsule for good spiritual health. Say, "God wants us to put only good things into our bodies. Let's make a vitamin capsule and fill it with the good things God provides."
  - Cut two two-litre clear plastic bottles in half for each child. Keep the bottom halves.... two for each child. Recycle the spout ends.
  - Make paper fruit each printed with the name of the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)
  - Sketch Christian symbols — dove, cross, Chi Rho, chalice, bread, flames etc. — onto small index cards or cut them out of construction paper (see Appendix B, p.43).
  - After all "ingredients" are in one plastic bottle half, tape on the other half using wide clear packing tape. What will you name this special vitamin capsule?
  - Write the name and your name with a permanent marker on the outside of the plastic capsule.



2. Create a FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT tree banner. Use felt, paper, or white sheet as a background.
  - a) Paper or Cloth Banner
    - Draw a large tree outline on paper or cloth using markers. (Sketch with chalk first to determine dimensions of tree, fruit, and words.) Use colourful markers to title the banner FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.
    - Sketch fruits around the tree. Use apples, peaches, bananas, grapes, and other fruits.
    - Print the names of the nine fruits of the Spirit scattered on the banner between the fruit. See Galatians 5:22-23.
  - b) Felt Banner
    - Cut a large tree out of felt and glue onto a felt background.
    - Title the banner with felt letters FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.
    - Sketch fruits onto paper patterns first, pin the patterns onto coloured felt pieces and cut them out.
    - Cut out felt letters for words naming the nine fruits or print words on white felt pieces. Arrange all the felt pieces around the tree before gluing into place.
3. Make a story box of meals with Jesus.
  - Brainstorm and list Bible stories about Jesus and meals on newsprint such as Zacchaeus, child with five loaves and two fish, Martha and Mary, Lord's Supper, fish fry with disciples on the beach, Emmaus meal.
  - Wrap or glue small boxes in white paper.
  - Invite children to draw meal pictures on the sides of the boxes. Use crayons, pencils or markers.
  - Play a game by taking turns rolling a story box on the table or floor. The owner of the box must tell the story of the picture that is facing up. Take boxes home.

### Music (suitable for all ages)

1. Learn the hymn *All who hunger, gladly gather* (*The Book of Praise*, #534). This communion hymn contains simple words and a lively, easy tune to sing. Teach verse one to sing in the closing worship. Print the words on a poster, provide hymnbooks, or copies of the first verse for each child. Give simple definitions for some words in verse one and the last line.
  - 'manna' means bread
  - 'yearn' is to want or long for
  - 'days of fullness' could be good and happy days
  - 'grace' is God's gift of undeserved love and forgiveness
 Play the tune from a recorded tape, or on a keyboard or piano.
2. Choose other hymns from *The Book of Praise*.
  - # 646, "Lead Me, Jesus". This hymn has only two lines and is easy to learn. The descant can be taught to older children. It is great for continuous singing.
  - # 348, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," first verse. This great older hymn may be familiar to many.
  - # 705, "God, Who Made the Earth". The easy tune and simple words explain God's love.
  - # 381, "Holy Spirit, Hear Us". The easy-to-learn tune and simple words explain the Holy Spirit.

Teach hymns as explained in #1 above.

### v. Respond in worship (10 minutes — Modify if necessary)

Invite children to look at items on the wonder table. Include the symbol basket, chalice, plate with roll, Bible, and globe, plates of fruit and crackers/muffins. Play worshipful music as children sit on the rug mats around the table.

1. Light the candle to signal the opening.
2. Recite and sign (see Appendix C, p.45).
  - Leader: The Lord be with you.
  - Children: And also with you.
  - Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Children: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

Children: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: God wants to fill us with good things so we can live the way Jesus taught. Eating healthy food, saying helpful words and being kind are ways to show God's love. In communion we become aware of the special spiritual food that Jesus offers us."

3. Sing *All who hunger, gladly gather* (*The Book of Praise*, #534).
4. Distribute the food. As children pass the plate of crackers to each other, invite them to say, "I share God's love with you." As the fruit is passed, invite each to say, "Thank you, Jesus, for good food."
5. Stand, hold hands and sing *Shalom chaverim* (*The Book of Praise*, #731) or a verse of *Lead me Jesus* (*The Book of Praise*, #646).
6. Extinguish the candle.
7. Name each child and say "May God's peace go with you."

# Appendix A

## Sample Letter to Parent(s), Caregiver(s) or Guardian(s)

**Adapt to your particular situation.**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Jesus initiated the Lord's Supper as a way of uniting his followers in an act of thanksgiving, remembrance, and hope. He was aware of a meal's ability to mark significant events in the long history of God's covenant relationships with people.

The importance of childhood nurturing in faith and ongoing support for Christian education cannot be overstated. As a child, Jesus participated in the religious meals of his day. Parent(s) and caregivers are the primary sources of the care and love that build the foundation of trust necessary for developing faith. In 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul attributes the faith of his young friend and fellow disciple to the faith of his grandmother and mother:

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. (NRSV)

Children need to be fully involved in the church's worship and life if they are to learn and grow in the faith. As a way of nurturing our children's faith development, the church session invites baptized children of faith to the Lord's table. In order to help our children develop a meaningful experience of communion, we will be using a teaching resource entitled *The Joyful Feast in God's Household*. The Bible stories, activities, and worship have been chosen and written to help your child grow in his/her understanding of communion.

Your church school teachers are beginning this program on (date) for (number) weeks.

We will need your support and help in the following ways.

- Offer materials needed for lesson activities (costume materials, art supplies).
- Be a classroom helper for a lesson.
- Provide a special place at home to display children's communion art symbols.
- Listen to your child's ideas and questions about communion.
- Borrow or buy *The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). This paraphrase of the Bible is "a delight to read or hear read aloud. It is an open-ended storybook, presenting endless possibilities for discussion with children. The beautiful illustrations are a far cry from the cartoonish pictures in so many children's Bible storybooks" (from a review in the *Presbyterian Record*). It is available from the PCC Book Room.
- Borrow or buy *Signs of God's Love* and *Symbols of God's Love* by Jeanne S. Fogle (Philadelphia: The Geneva Press). Fogle explains the signs and symbols of baptism and communion simply and colourfully.) These books are available from the PCC Book Room.
- Worship, wonder, and joyfully feast with your child at the Lord's Table as the household of God grows in understanding, love, and grace.

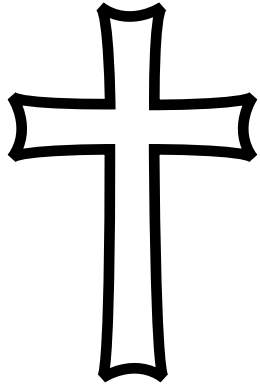
We look forward to seeing (name of child/children) on (date) at (time).

Faithfully,

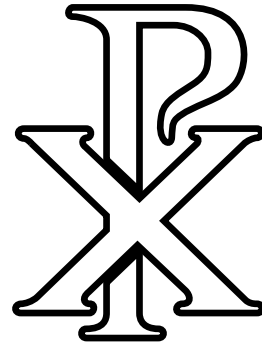
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# Appendix B

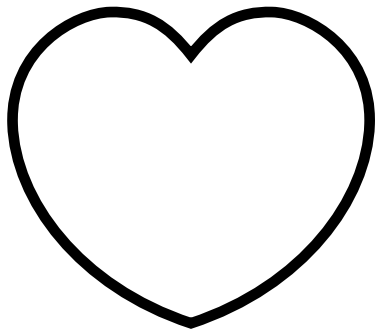
## Symbols



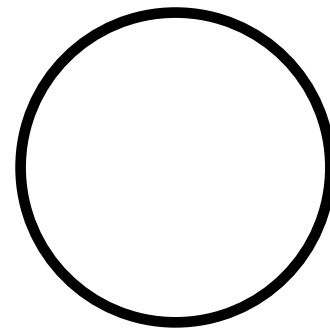
Cross



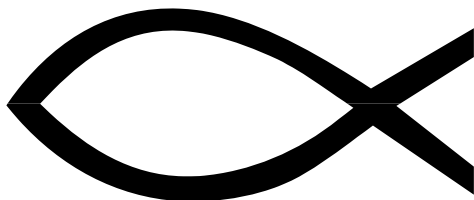
Chi-Rho



Heart



Circle (God)



ICHTHUS Fish (Jesus)



flames (Pentecost)



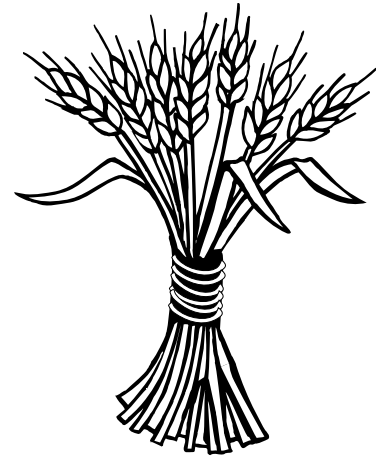
Bread



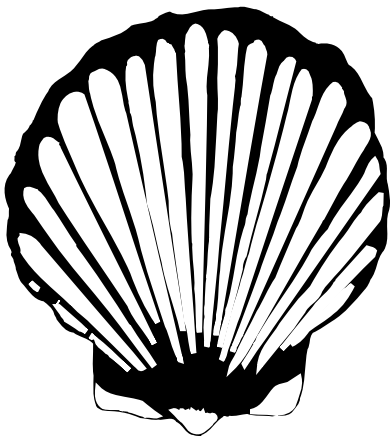
Chalice



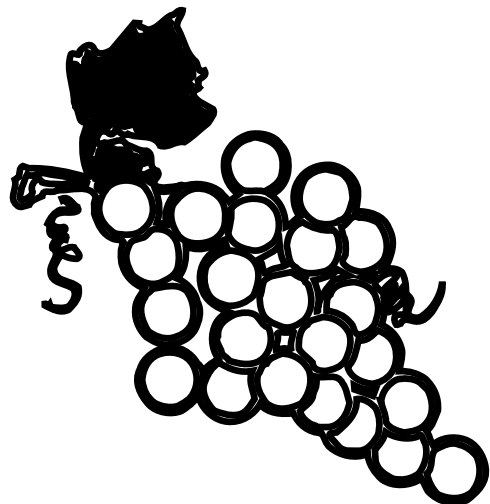
Dove (Holy Spirit)



Wheat sheaves



Scallop shell (baptism)



Grapes

# Appendix C

## Sign Language for Communion Ritual Opening and Sample Hymn

**Note:** In sign language, the only words signed are those necessary to convey the basic meaning of the sentence; therefore, only the essential words for the ritual sayings and the hymn *Eat this bread* are given here.

### RITUAL: (basic form)

Lord with you

And with you

Lift hearts

We lift hearts to Lord

Let us give thanks to God

Right to give God thanks and praise

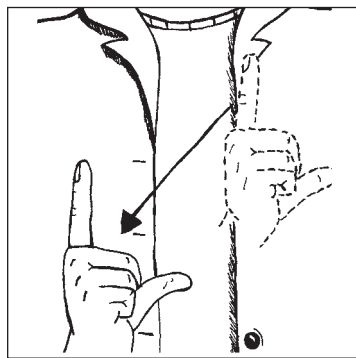
### HYMN: (basic form)

Eat bread drink wine (cup)

Come to me (Jesus) and not hungry

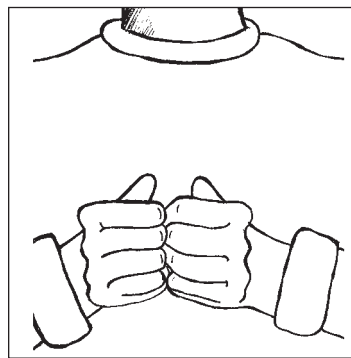
Eat bread drink wine (cup)

Trust me (Jesus) and not thirst



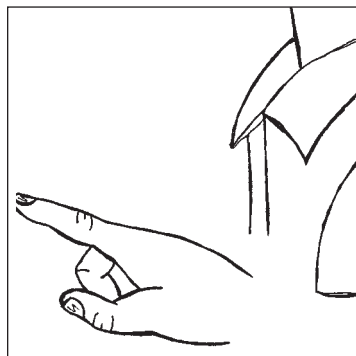
#### Lord

Place the right "L" at the left shoulder, then on the right waist.



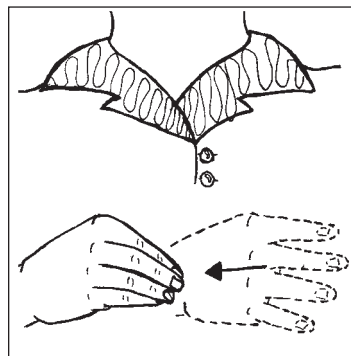
#### With

Place closed hands together, palm to palm.



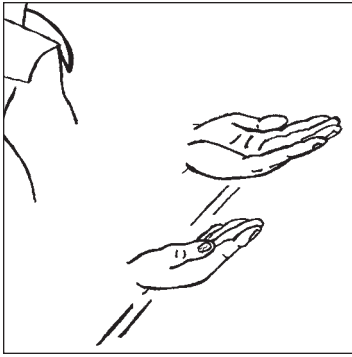
#### You/Me (Jesus)

For 'you', point the index finger out, and for 'me' point it at yourself.



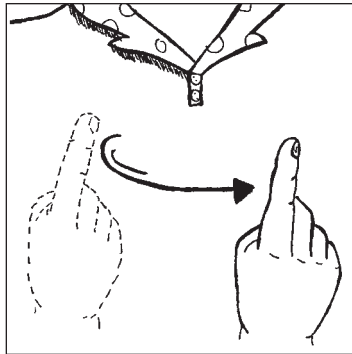
#### And

Place the right hand in front of you, fingers spread apart and pointing left (palm facing you); then draw the hand to the right, closing the tips.



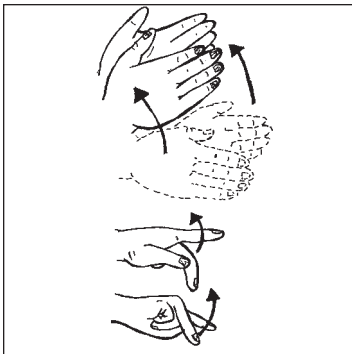
### Lift

Both hands open, palms up, move from right to left in front of the body.



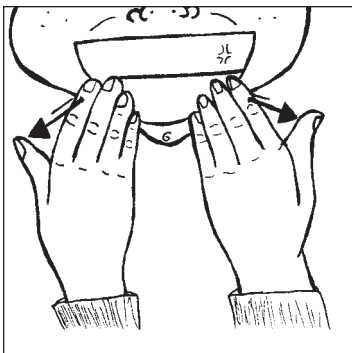
### We/Us

Place the index finger at the right shoulder and circle it forward and around until it touches the left shoulder.



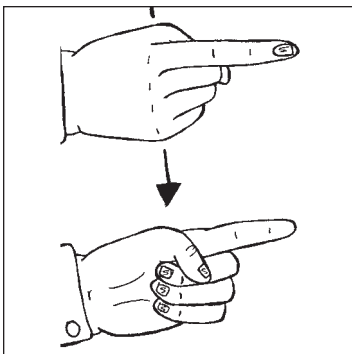
### Let

Both open hands with fingers pointing forward (palms facing in) are bent upward from the wrist until fingers point slightly upward and then outward (the heels of the hands are being closer together than the tips of the fingers).



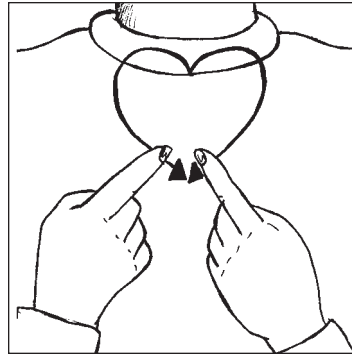
### Thanks

Place the tips of the open hands against the mouth and throw them forward, similar to throwing a kiss.



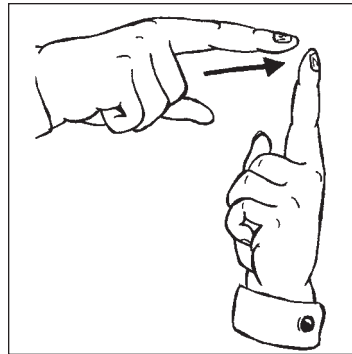
### Right

Make the following sign twice: the little-finger edge of the right hand is placed on the index of the left hand so that both index fingers point forward, one above the other.



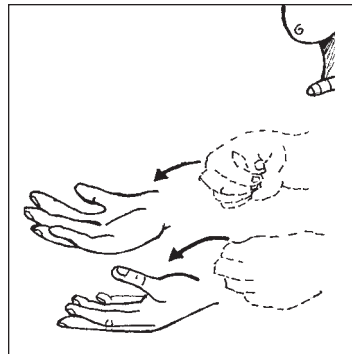
### Heart

Trace a heart on the chest with index fingers.



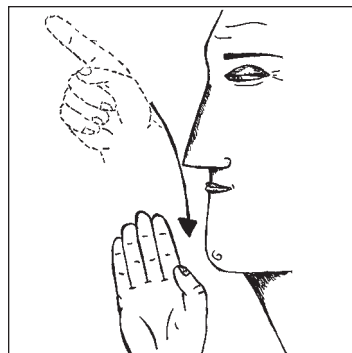
### To

Direct the right index finger toward and then touch the left index fingertip which is pointing up.



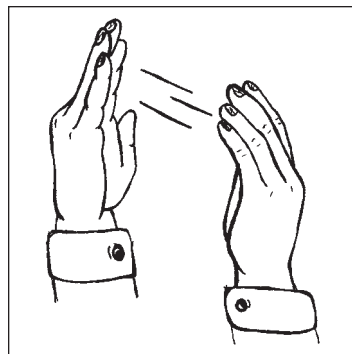
### Give

Both hands facing down are turned in-up-forward, ending with palms open and facing up.



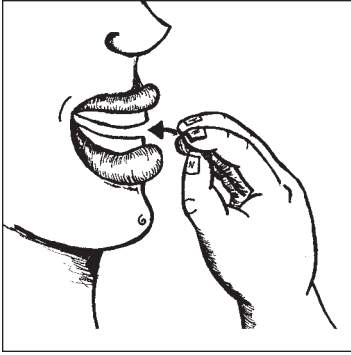
### God

Point the "G" forward in front of you, draw it up and back down, opening the palm, which is facing left.



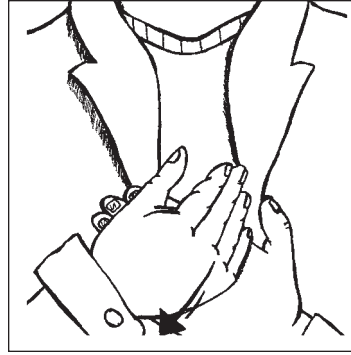
### Praise

Clap the hands several times.



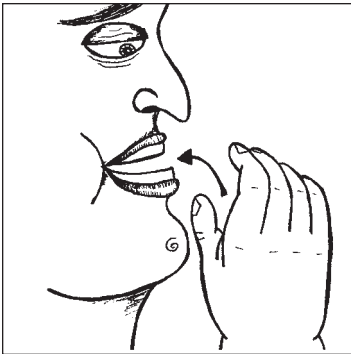
### Eat

The hand is moved lightly toward the mouth several times.



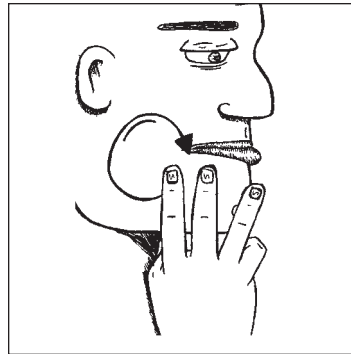
### Bread

Place the left hand in front of the body, fingers pointing right; draw the little-finger side of the right hand down the back of the left hand several times (like you're slicing a loaf of bread that is in your arm).



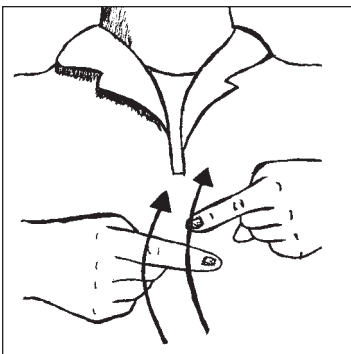
### Drink

Place the hand in front of the mouth, palm facing left, and make a motion as if pouring a drink to the mouth.



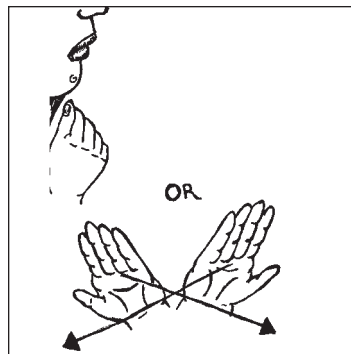
### Wine

Form a "W" with the three middle fingers and move in circular motion against the cheek.



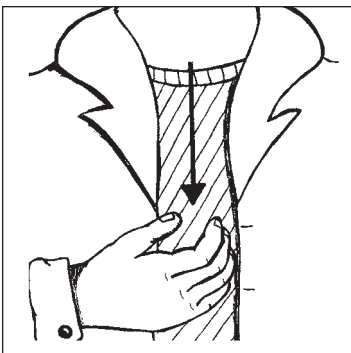
### Come

Rotate index finger once around each other, moving toward the body. Alternatively, use an open hand in a beckoning motion.



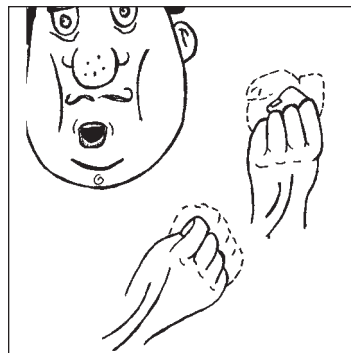
### Not

Place the thumb of the right hand under the chin and move it forward OR cross open hands before you, palms down, and draw them apart.



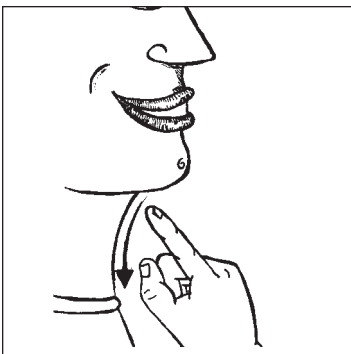
### Hungry

Place the hand just below the throat, palm facing in, and draw it down.



### Trust

Bring both hands slightly to the left, closing them to fists, with the right one just slightly below the left.



### Thirst

Draw the tip of the index finger down the throat.



# Appendix D

## Finger Labyrinth

