

# Learning About Communion Lesson Plans

This program consists of 5 sessions of 60 minutes each:

1. **Your Church Family**
2. **Celebrations**
3. **Jesus Shares Meals**
4. **The Last Supper (lasts an extra 5 minutes in order to make bread)**
5. **Celebrate Communion**

## Notes:

1. Each family makes a commitment to attend all five sessions. Both a parent and the child attend the sessions together.
2. Each family will receive a notebook to keep that contains all of the written materials used in the class.
3. Each child will make a banner, as a remembrance of our time together. The banner will have symbols added to it each week.

## THINGS TO DO PRIOR TO SESSION 1:

- I. At least one month before the classes, **advertise** in the church bulletin and send home flyers via the Sunday School classes to invite families to register for the classes. Make sure to put a registration deadline of 2 weeks before Session 1.
- II. **Prepare a notebook for each family**, which contains:
  - The roster for the class, to include names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
  - A reminder letter of all of the session dates and times
  - The pages for Sessions 1 through 5, with each Session separated by a colored sheet of paper.
  - Copies of the Communion Ritual and Communion songs, printed and collated into 4 ¼ by 5 ½ inch size
  - Nametags prepared for members of each family
  - A copy of the Communion Bread recipe (inserted in Session 4 section of notebook)

III. **Purchase and prepare the materials for the banners.** Buy sufficient material to make one banner per student. (Be sure to have extras on hand in case a student needs to redo a part.)

- White felt cut into 15” by 22” rectangles. Fold over the top 1 inch of each rectangle and stitch down to use as the dowel holder. On the remaining 3 sides of each rectangle, use a scalloped rotary cutter to finish the edges.
- Brown foam cut into the shape of tables
- Small foam churches, Christian fish symbols, and hearts
- Purple acrylic paints (“Grape” or “red violet”) to be used for making grapes
- Round stencil or dauber sponge shape to dip into the purple paint to make grapes
- Dried wheat, 2 per banner
- Several colors of Sharpie or fabric marker pens (green needed for the class when making the grapes)
- Glue (Elmer’s is fine)
- Small dowel rods, 1 for each banner, 16 inches long, and less than ½ inch in diameter
- For each banner, a 22-inches long, white cord, to tie to the ends of the dowel rods for hanging the banners
- 4 to 6 inch high wood, felt, or foam crosses for each banner
- Wooden flat plaques in any decorative shape to write Bible verses on and then glue onto the banners

IV. **Prepare a CD of music** to be used for accompaniment when singing the communion songs.

V. One week prior to the first class, **send out letters** to each family reminding them of the meeting times and dates, and the importance of arriving on time.

## Session 1 Your Church Family

### *Set up prior to arrival of families:*

- Have two circles of chairs set up, an inner circle facing an outer circle with one chair per adult in the inner circle, and one chair per student in the outer circle.
- Have a work area set up for banners with these materials ready:
  - Felt rectangles for banners
  - Sharpies or fabric markers
  - Glue
  - Symbols for this class: foam churches and Christian fish symbol
- Have family notebooks ready to be handed out
- Have Session 1 Bible verse references on strips of paper to be looked up by students when they arrive
- Bibles
- Pens and pencils

### *As people arrive:*

- Hand out notebooks to each family. Each person should find his/her nametag inside the notebook and put it on.
- Hand out a Bible and Bible verse reference to students as they arrive. Have parents help their children look up the specified Bible verses, to be read later in the session.

### *10 minutes*

- Welcome everyone and have the parents sit in the inner circle with their child sitting across from them in the outer circle.
- **Play a short get acquainted game:** The teacher asks one question of the whole group, and the two people across from each other discuss it. After 1 minute, the outer circle of children move to the right one chair, and now they are sitting across from a different adult. Ask another question for pairs of adults and students to discuss. Continue rotating around the circle and asking different questions for 10 minutes.

### Possible questions:

1. Where were you born?
2. How many people are in your family? Name them.
3. Do you have any pets?
4. What is one of your favorite things about our church?
5. What do you want to be when you grow up?
6. What is your favorite Bible story?
7. What is your favorite dessert?
8. If there was someone famous you could meet, who would you like to meet?
9. Think of two words that best describe you.
10. If you had some free time, what special thing would you like to do?

- After the game, have everyone move their chairs to form one large circle. Ask parents to sit next to their children.

*15 minutes*

- **Discuss our symbols for the class – Christian fish symbol and the Church**
- **Make 1<sup>st</sup> portion of our celebration banners.** Have each child write his/her first and last name on their banners. They will also glue on the symbols for today’s class. (We plan to use permanent markers to have each child practice and then write their names on their banners. They can be as creative as they wish.)

*5 minutes*

- Discuss the page **What is Communion?** It is a celebration, a remembrance, the sharing of a meal, and special time with Jesus.

*10 minutes*

- **Make My Family Pictures:** “Our first session is about families. We’d like for each person to draw their own picture of the people in their family. Parents will draw a picture too!”
- “What does it mean to be a family? How does it feel to be a part of a family?”

*10 minutes*

- **Read Bible Verses about Families:** “Besides being members of our own families, we are also members of God’s family. Let’s read what the Bible has to say about it.” (Turn to **What does the Bible say about Families?** page in their notebooks.) Ask the individuals who looked up the Bible verses to read their verses aloud to the group.
- “What does it mean to be a part of God’s family? How does it feel to be a part of God’s family?”
- Sign pages **We are All Members of Christ’s Family**

*5 minutes*

- **Sing a communion song.** Lead the group in learning the first communion song, #618 Let Us Break Bread Together. (Show the families where to find the songs in our communion ritual booklets.)
- **Hold hands and say a closing prayer together.** Promise to pray for each other throughout the week.

**BE SURE TO END THE SESSION ON TIME.**

**(One teacher will take the banners home, and will add glue as necessary to the banners each week. Then, she will bring the banners back for each session along with the materials needed for the week.)**

## Session 2 Celebrations

### *Set up prior to arrival of families:*

- Have chairs set up in a circle. Blow up party balloons and tape them to the back of each chair.
- Have a work area set up for banners with these materials ready:
  - Banners that were started last week
  - Sharpies or fabric markers
  - Glue
  - Symbol for this class: Table
- Have a United Methodist Hymnal, a Bible, chalice, and a basket ready to use as props
- Have pens and pencils ready for use

### *As people arrive,*

- Families should sign each others' pages: **We are All Members of Christ's Family**

### *10 minutes*

- **Discuss our symbol for this class** – Table
- **Show our list of Bible verses** – explain how the students will need to think about which Bible verse they will want to place on their banners in 2 weeks. They may find different verses from the Bible if they wish.
- **Continue work on our celebration banners.** Students will add the symbol of a table to their banners, and will continue decorating their banners as time allows.

### *15- 20 minutes*

- Have chairs set up with parents sitting next to their own children. Welcome everyone and announce that our topic for the evening is “Celebrations.”
- First we’ll think about ways your family celebrates. Turn to the page in your notebook “How does your family celebrate?” Take a few minutes to talk among your family members and fill out What, Who, How, When, and Where we celebrate with our families. Also think about how each celebration makes you feel.
- Discuss different celebrations that the families wrote about on their papers.

### *10 minutes*

- As a transition to discuss how the church celebrates, mention how family celebrations represent an agreement in a family that an event is worthy of coming together to share.
- **The Church Celebrates** – Make sure everyone has a copy of the booklet “A Service of Word and Table I.” Use **The Church Celebrates** pages to discuss an overview of a communion service. Have students hold up the appropriate props (Bible, hymnal, chalice, basket) to help visualize the parts of the service.

*10 minutes*

- As a part of “our agreement” when we celebrate communion, **The Apostles’ Creed** states our common beliefs about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Read together and discuss what the sections of **The Apostles’ Creed** means.

*10 minutes*

- **Sing a communion song.** Lead the group in learning the communion ritual songs **Holy, Holy, Holy, Christ Has Died,** and **Amen.** If there is time, practice the song we learned last week.
- **Hold hands and say a closing prayer together.** Promise to pray for each other throughout the week.

## THINGS TO DO PRIOR TO SESSION 3

- Prepare a picnic basket with cookies or snacks, napkins, and water bottles or juice boxes to use for the class picnic.
- Buy small dinner rolls and large Goldfish crackers
- Find a blanket to use for Class Picnic

## Session 3 Jesus Shares Meals

### *Set up prior to arrival of families:*

- Have chairs set up in a circle.
- Have a work area set up for banners with these materials ready:
  - Banners that students have been working on
  - Sharpies or fabric markers, especially green for the grape stems
  - Glue
  - Purple paint and containers to pour the paint into
  - Round stencil or shape to make grapes
  - 2 clumps of wheat per student
  - Scissors for students to cut their wheat to their desired sizes
  - Paper towels or baby wipes for clean up
- Picnic basket with cookies or snacks, napkins, and water bottles or juice boxes.
- Have picnic blanket ready to be placed on floor for Class Picnic
- Small dinner rolls and large Goldfish crackers to use when acting out the **Story of the Loaves and the Fishes**. Place a few in a basket to represent the boy's lunch. Have other baskets ready (and hidden from view) to represent Jesus' miracle of multiplying the loaves and the fish.
- Have pens and pencils ready for use

### *10 minutes*

- **Discuss our symbol for this class** – Wheat and grapes
- **Work on our celebration banners.** Students will glue wheat to their banners and use paint and markers to create clumps of grapes on their banners.
- As time allows, students may continue decorating their banners.

### *10 minutes*

- **Have a class picnic** – Place a picnic blanket on the floor. Have students sit around the blanket on the floor to have a picnic. Parents may sit in chairs around the blanket, if they prefer. Place the picnic basket with cookies, napkins and drinks in the middle of the picnic area.
- **Invite** everyone to enjoy some cookies and drinks. Tell how Jesus enjoyed eating with his friends and disciples. Take about how Jesus ate with all kinds of people (see page in notebook with the same title.)
- **As people enjoy their cookies and drinks**, discuss the Bible stories (next section.)

*25 minutes (Bible stories and skits)*

- For the **Story of the Loaves and the Fishes**, assign parts and have everyone participate in reading and acting out the story. Give the small basket of rolls and Goldfish crackers to the child playing “the boy” in the story. Have the multiplied baskets of rolls and crackers nearby, but covered. At the end of the story, have everyone enjoy eating some rolls and crackers. Discuss the miracle that Jesus performed. Why do you think Jesus performed that miracle?
- For the **Wedding in Galilee**, ask for volunteers to read the story to the group. This tells us that Jesus enjoyed parties and special celebrations too. He helped out when they were running out of wine, and he performed his first miracle.
- For **Mary, Martha, and Lazarus**, assign parts and have everyone participate in reading and acting out the story. Why do you think Jesus said what he did to Martha?
- *Read the Zaccheus Story if time allows.* Ask for volunteers to read the story to the group. Talk about how Jesus even ate with people no one else liked. Jesus’ compassion and love helped Zaccheus to change his ways, and give back the money he had taken.

*10 minutes*

- **Sing a communion song.** Lead the group in learning the song #2269 **Come, Share the Lord.**
- **Hold hands and say a closing prayer.** Promise to pray for each other throughout the week
- **Remind everyone** that next week’s session will last an extra 15 minutes, and they need to bring a large bowl and wooden spoon for each student.

## THINGS TO DO PRIOR TO SESSION 4

For making bread:

- Purchase PAM spray, flour, salt, sugar, yeast, margarine, and eggs for bread recipe.
- How much to buy:
  - 5 lbs of flour makes 7 copies of the bread recipe (enough for 7 students)
  - 2 lbs of sugar makes 7 copies of the bread recipe
  - 3 mini foil pans per student
  - 1 package of yeast per student
  - 1 egg per student
  - 2 Tablespoons of margarine per student (1 stick = 4 students)
- Buy foil bread pans in small or mini sizes, and aluminum foil for covering the pans to take them home.
- Buy gallon size plastic zip-lock bags to measure ingredients into.

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- For each student, measure 2 cups of flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt, and 3 tablespoons of sugar and into a gallon size plastic bag.

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- Melt margarine in a plastic container just before leaving home for Session 4.
  - Bring measuring cup and measuring spoons (tablespoons) to use for Session 4.

For re-enacting the Last Supper:

- Buy 2 loaves of Challa bread, 2 large bottles of grape juice, cups, napkins, and plates
- Bring a white tablecloth to cover the table

## Session 4 The Last Supper (1 hour and 15 minutes)

*Set up prior to arrival of families:*

- Have chairs set up in a semi-circle, with a table in front to use for the Last Supper.
- Have a work area set up for making bread:
  - Pre-measured dry ingredients, in one gallon bags
  - Aluminum foil
  - Pam spray
  - Yeast, eggs, and melted margarine
  - Measuring cups and measuring spoons
  - Black sharpie marker for labeling the loaf pans

- Have these materials ready to use later when working on their banners:
  - Banners that students have been working on
  - Sharpies or fabric markers, especially green for the grape stems
  - Glue
  - Cross for each banner
  - Wooden flat plaques to be used for writing their Bible verses
  - Paper towels or baby wipes for clean up
  - Extra large bowl and spoon (in case a family forgets to bring theirs)
  - Box or cookie sheet to transport bread home
- Last Supper items (ready for use)
  - Table with tablecloth on it
  - Grape juice, Challah bread, cups, plates, and napkins placed in bags below the table
  - A Jewish Passover Celebration book (optional)

**As people arrive, they can go ahead and get started on part 1 of making bread.**

*15 minutes*

- **Start Making Bread** – class will last 15 minutes longer today in order to allow time to create our homemade bread recipe. Each family will bring their own large bowl and wooden spoon. Have family members wash their hands. Then, direct the students in following the first two steps of the bread recipe. The bread dough will need to rise while the class continues. One teacher will clean up and get things ready for banners to be worked on, while the other teacher starts the Last Supper activity.

*15 minutes*

- **Jesus Ate the Last Supper** – Have bread, grape juice, cups, plates, and napkins in a bag under the table. Have everyone sit around the table. Have a couple of students act as disciples in helping to prepare the Passover meal in the Upper Room. The students will pass out the napkins and plates, and will pour grape juice for each person. **NO ONE** should eat or drink yet.
- **Tell the story** of Jesus celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples. Tell about Jesus' saying "**This is my body, broken for you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me.**" Then share the bread and have everyone break off a piece of bread and repeat "Do this in remembrance of me."
- **Likewise**, hold up a cup of grape juice and say, "**This is the blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**" Have everyone drink some grape juice and eat more bread as they wish.

*20 minutes*

- **Add symbols and Bible verses to our celebration banners.** Students will add the symbols of a cross and a heart to their banners. They will also write a favorite Bible verse onto their wooden plaques, and then glue the plaques onto their banners.
- **Parents will insert wooden dowel rods** into their children's banners, and then tie the cords at the ends of the dowel rods so that the banners can be hung.

- A teacher will take all of the banners home, not the students. The students will take their banners home after Session 5.

*10 minutes*

- **Finish Bread steps:**
  - **Have students wash their hands and then** stir down the batter in their bowls.
  - **Spray foil pans** with Pam (be sure to use only a slight amount!)
  - **Divide the batter** into individual foil pans.
  - **Cover the foil pans** with aluminum foil.
- Each student will take home 2 mini loaves of bread and a teacher will take all of the other mini loaves home to be baked. (After baking, 2 loaves will be cut up and frozen for use as our communion bread in session 5. The other loaves will be presented as gifts to office staff, maintenance staff, and pastors.)

*5 minutes*

- **A New Commandment** – Discuss the new commandment that Jesus gave his disciples at the Last Supper. Discuss how we can show love as Christians.

*10 minutes*

- **Practice communion songs.** Lead the group in learning the song #620 **One Bread, One Body**
- **Have everyone look at Session #5 page in their notebooks.** It gives instructions for next week's celebration of Communion.
- **Hold hands and say a closing prayer.** Promise to pray for each other throughout the week.

## **THINGS TO DO AFTER SESSION 4**

- Take the loaves of bread home and bake them.
- Take two of the baked loaves and cut the bread into small cubes. Place in baggies and freeze the cubed bread.
- Place communion class "Thank You" labels onto wrapped loaves of bread.
- Deliver the bread to office staff, maintenance staff, and pastors to thank them for their help and support.

## **THINGS TO DO PRIOR TO SESSION 5**

- The night before Session 5, **thaw out bread** for communion
- Bring communion bread and a nice basket with white linens to church
- Coordinate with Pastor Stephen as to who will bring **grape juice** for the service
- **Bring students' banners** to the service to be hung up around the altar.
- **Have extra copies** of the communion ritual booklet available for the service
- **Talk with Pastor Stephen** about the scripture lessons to be used for Session 5's worship service
- **Talk with Pastor Stephen** about future dates for communion that families can sign up to help as communion servers.

## **Session 5 Celebrate Communion**

- **Prior to the arrival of the families for our final session, hang the celebration banners around the altar area.**
- **Put the communion bread cubes, which are in a nice basket and wrapped in linens, on the altar.**
- **Pour the grape juice into the chalice and place the chalice on the altar.**
- **Light the altar candles.**
- **As families arrive ask for volunteers to read the gospel and other scripture readings during the service**
- **The minister will conduct the communion service, and everyone will use their communion ritual booklets as their guide. The minister will explain as he progresses through the ritual, and everyone will partake of the communion elements.**
- **After the service, take class photos with the minister.**
- **Have families sign up to help with communion during church services in the future.**