



Lesson #6

What is Communion?



**Scripture Reference: Exodus 12
Luke 22:7-13,19-20**



Goal: We remember Jesus giving His body and blood for us.

As the bread and cup of The Lord's Supper are passed through the pews or even offered at the altar, it is commonplace to see children taking the elements. Yet how many of these children are truly remembering Jesus' body and blood given for us, and how many are simply having a mid-morning snack? This lesson is designed to help children investigate the ordinance of communion, its history, symbolism, and mechanics. By taking part in the interactive activities listed, the children will also express their own thankfulness to Jesus.



Opening Activity:

(For this activity, you will need a sample of bread made with yeast and a sample of unleavened bread, such as pita bread.)

Sit in a circle on the floor. Place the two bread samples in front of the children. Say: **Today I've brought two kinds of bread to share with you.** Give the children a small portion of each to eat, then ask: **How are these two breads alike? How are they different? Which bread did you like the best?**

One of the main differences between these two types of bread is an ingredient called yeast. Yeast is what makes the bread rise up and become fluffy. Which bread do you think has yeast in it? When you make bread with yeast, you must allow the bread to sit in the pan and rise for a few hours before you bake it. So it takes much longer to make yeast bread than to make unleavened bread. Unleavened bread is another name for bread made without yeast.

Many years ago, long before Jesus was born, the Israelites, or Jewish people, were slaves in Egypt. God promised to bring them out of Egypt to a land of their own where they would be free. The Israelites didn't know the exact hour when God would tell them to leave Egypt, but they knew when it was time to leave, they would have to do so very quickly. They wouldn't have time to wait for their bread to rise. Instead, they made unleavened bread that they could take with them at a moment's notice.

We can read about this unleavened bread in Exodus, Chapter 12, in the Bible. Open the Bible to show the children the location. Throughout the years, as a reminder of how God freed them from the Egyptians, the Jewish people have celebrated a holiday called the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. It is also known as the Passover. Even Jesus celebrated this holiday when He lived on Earth. Let's pay a visit to Jesus and His disciples during the Passover.



Bible Experience:

(For this activity, you will need Bibles and a picnic basket packed with a tablecloth and enough plates, cups, napkins and silverware to set a place for each child at the table.)

Have the children gather around the table and look up Luke 22:7-13 in the Bibles. Ask someone to read the passage. Say: **Jesus sent Peter and John to get things ready for the Passover meal. Let's help them by setting the table.** Pull out picnic basket and have the children assist in setting the table. When finished have each child sit by one of the place settings.

All we need now is the food. What kind of food would you expect to eat at a holiday meal? The food Jesus and His disciples ate would have been much different. We know one of the foods would have been unleavened bread. Another food would have been roast lamb. They would've had wine to drink because of the many vineyards in the area.

This particular Passover would be the last one Jesus would get to celebrate with His disciples. He knew He would soon die. Jesus wanted His disciples to always remember this meal. He also wanted them to understand why He had to die. He wanted to do something special for them. Let's read about that something special in the Bible. Have the children read Luke 22:19-20 aloud.

Jesus said the bread was His body. He wanted the disciples to know His body was going to be beaten and placed on cross. He said the cup or wine was His blood. He wanted His friends to know He was willing to die for them, to shed His blood, so their sins could be forgiven.

The disciples weren't *really* eating Jesus' body or drinking His blood. But whenever the disciples ate the bread, they would think of Jesus' body on the cross, and whenever they drank from the cup, they would think of how He bled and died. It was a special way Jesus gave them to remember Him after He was gone. It's a way we can remember Him, too.



Life Application:

(For this activity, you will need a communion bread plate and cup tray without the actual elements.)

Move to sit in a circle on the floor again. Say: **Who remembers what an ordinance is?** *a special action Jesus did and told us to do also* **What two ordinances have we learned about so far? The third ordinance our denomination believes in is Communion. Sometimes it's also called The Lord's Supper because it is based on what Jesus told His disciples during His last Passover with them. When He gave them the bread and the cup, He told them, "Do this in remembrance of Me."**

Show the children the communion plate and cup tray. **How many of you have seen these items before? Where did you see them? The pastor uses these items when he offers communion to the people in church.** Explain how your local church does communion (i.e. whole loaf of bread or pieces, in

pews or at altar, how often, grape juice instead of wine, the pastor's words, etc.). Also field any questions the children may have.

Conclude this activity by saying: **Some of you may have taken part in communion before, but some of you may not have. Usually we only do it after we have asked Jesus to forgive our sins, after we have made a decision to live for Him. Then communion becomes a very special time for us to thank Jesus for all He's done for us.**



Closing Activity:

(This activity is a memory game and will require no supplies.)

Remain in a circle. Say: **We won't actually take part in communion today, because not everyone may be ready. Your parents can help you to know *when* you are ready. But we can still thank Jesus today for all He's done for us.**

We're going to play a memory game to help us do that; the game is called "Thank You Jesus." Begin with the child on your left. Have the child say, "Thank you Jesus for..." and name one thing for which she wants to thank Jesus. The next child repeats the first child's item, then adds his own. Continue clockwise around the circle until each person, including yourself, has had a turn. Each person must say all the previous answers before adding his own. If you have a small class, you may want to go around the circle two or three times.

Close by praying: **Dear Jesus, You have been so good to us. There are many things we thank You for today; we mentioned a few of them while playing the game. We especially thank You for giving Your body and blood on the cross for us, and we thank You for giving us the ordinance of communion to help us always remember Your love. Amen.**