



Holy Thursday Dinner Church Experience

This is an opportunity to create an intimate worship experience. We suggest that you set tables for 10-12 persons if possible. You can provide a meal, do a potluck or ask for hosts to bring a meal for a table of 12. Setting the table and providing hospitality are important parts of this experience. Make sure each table has someone who will lead the conversation and begin serving communion. Each table should include a loaf of bread and cup of grape juice for communion later. It is helpful to have a bulletin so that people have the scripture, questions and responses at hand (a template is offered).

Part 1 (30-40 minutes) WELCOME

Welcome to this Holy Thursday celebration. On this night we remember and celebrate the final supper Jesus shared with his disciples.

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Come to the Lord's Table,
all you who love him.
Come to the Lord's Table,
confess your sin.
Come to the Lord's Table,
be at peace.

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Scripture Passage: Luke 22:7-14

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. Luke 22:7-14

TABLE GRACE

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Creator of the Universe. Through your work, all things were made, and by your goodness we have this food to share. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

FELLOWSHIP

If you are using this as a dinner church experience, enjoy this time of greeting, meeting and eating. Invite people to address the icebreaker questions. You can finish eating before you begin Part 2 or have dessert as you discuss Wrestling with the Word. Another option is to have dessert after communion. To keep this to 1.5 hours, it is important to begin Part 2 no more than 40 minutes into the evening.

BREAKING THE ICE

Remember back to your first experience of church. What was communion like to you?

Describe the elements of communion. What is significant about the elements of communion? What is your favorite part of communion?



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Part 2(50-60 minutes) SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 22:14-22

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

And he took 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."

And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD

Listen in to Jesus' conversation with his disciples. Jesus has a strong desire to spend this evening with his followers. Is this surprising? What distracts you from God who desires a loving, honest and constructive conversation with you?

Imagine that scene with Jesus' disciples as he changes the meaning of the Passover meal. Put yourself in the shoes of a disciple at the table. What would you be thinking and feeling as Jesus infuses new meaning into a treasured tradition? How do you understand "New Covenant" in his body and blood?

Do you do something consistently to remind you of something or someone?

Jesus tells us "Do this in remembrance of me." Why do you think Jesus sees it necessary to remind us?

NEXT STEPS

While communion is a rite to remember, it also points to the present and the future. How do you see this lived out?

This Thursday is often known as Maundy Thursday. "Maundy," a form of the word "mandate." And what is a mandate?

COMMUNION

The pastor gets everyone's attention to begin Communion.

Feel free to use the following liturgy to recall Christ's institution of the Last Supper or tell the story in your own words.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

On this night we come to remember just as Jesus' followers did so long ago. We come to be reminded that our God is a God of protection. That our God is faithful. That our God will make a way, even when it seems impossible.

On this night we come to remember that night that Jesus would offer himself as the Passover lamb. That a new covenant was formed, a promise of love that even death could not steal away.

On that night Jesus gathered together family and friends for one last meal before he humbly gave himself over to suffer and die.

On that night Jesus would eat a feast with those who would later betray, deny and abandon him. And instead of malice or anger he offers them the gift of forgiveness and grace.

Taking bread, he gave thanks to God, broke the bread, and gave it to those present saying:

"This is my body broken for you. Whenever you eat this bread, remember me."

At the end of the meal, he took the cup, gave thanks to God, and said:



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"This is my blood shed to ratify God's covenant of grace with you and with many for the forgiveness of sin. Whenever you drink of this, remember me."

Tonight, we offer our praises and thanksgiving for this gift of love. Tonight, we eat this meal to connect with God, with each other and so that we may be strengthened to serve the world in the name of Jesus. Tonight we are reminded that this meal is not merely a remembrance but a holy mystery.

Pour out your Spirit on us.

Pour out your Spirit on us.

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts.

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts.

Make these gifts the body and blood of Christ.

Make us, through them, Christ's body alive in the world.

Abba, Father!

Let your kingdom come!

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

Come, Lord Jesus!

Be our daily bread.

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

Holy Spirit!

Send us to the world.

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

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HOLY COMMUNION

Because the table at which we gather belongs to the Lord, all are invited to join in this communion meal, as a response to the love of Christ. Please remain seated and we will bring communion to your place.

(The elements are distributed by tables; the hosts and hostesses will serve the elements to their tables)

THANKSGIVING

We thank you Lord, for giving us this sacred meal, for giving us your presence and your life and for reminding us of your everlasting grace, which will be celebrated for all eternity. Amen.



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