

Parent's Guide

Communion

AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO PREPARE CHILDREN TO CELEBRATE
THEIR FAITH COMMITMENT THROUGH COMMUNION



COMPILED BY GREG HILL & FRANK GEREMIA

Contents

PREFACE: A WORD TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.....	I
HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL.....	II
I. OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY OF COMMUNION	1
II. NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY OF COMMUNION	4
III. WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT COMMUNION? PART 1	8
IV. WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT COMMUNION? PART 2	11
V. WAYS TO OBSERVE COMMUNION	13
VI. WHAT DO THE BREAD AND JUICE MEAN?	14
VII. WHO CAN TAKE COMMUNION?	16
VIII. WHAT DID I LEARN?	18
A FINAL WORD TO THE PARENT(S)	i
GOSPEL FLUENCY	ii

A WORD TO THE PARENT(S) AND GUARDIAN(S):

Now that you have a child who has shown interest in taking communion, you may be wondering what to do. We have written this book as a series of "Faith Talks" to serve as an interactive guide, helping you assess and prepare your child for communion.

Faith Talks are conversations that you have with your child about the truth of God and how it impacts our lives. You do not have to be a Bible scholar or teacher to lead a child through these.

A Warning: The purpose of this book is not to "just" take communion.

Communion is the celebration of a milestone, the Faith Commitment Milestone. That means that the goal is not the activity of communion; the goal is to join with God in the development of your child's faith commitment to Jesus. If your goal is to simply get a child to take communion, you will find this workbook frustrating.

However, if your goal is to help nurture your child's life-long faith commitment, then this should be a helpful tool leading to a meaningful celebration through communion. Here are some next steps:

1. Contact the Family Ministries Coordinator to let her know that you will be working through this important milestone of "Faith Commitment" with your child. She will pray for you and point you to valuable resources along the way.
2. Read the chapter entitled "Helping Children Understand The Gospel."
3. Set aside some time: you won't find the time to have these faith talk conversations- you have to make time. Carve it out of your schedule .
4. Build anticipation: make it special, a good atmosphere for conversations.
5. Make sure you have a "Parent's Guide" and a "Student's Guide." Using the Parent's Guide, you will lead your child through each chapter. Give the child the opportunity to wrestle with the material and ask questions. Let them do most of the work. You're there to guide them. The scripture references are from the ESV (English Standard Version). You may want to have one handy or search for one on biblegateway.com in order to answer some of the questions.
6. Pray for and with your child. Pray that they would have a soft heart toward the things God wants them to know.
7. Each child is different, so adapt this book to make it work for your child.
8. ENJOY this PRECIOUS and FORMATIVE TIME!

HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL

This critical section is for parents. It tries to answer the question, "How do we present the Gospel to our children in such a way that it can be clearly understood and embraced, so that they may be saved and become a life-long follower of Jesus?"

People use different words to describe being saved. In John 4, Jesus talked about living water, and in chapter 3 He talked about being born again. When Jesus used the language of being "born a second time," the man Jesus was talking to was confused and asked how it was possible to re-enter his mother's womb. You can see why he was confused. Jesus explained that He was not talking about a physical birth but a spiritual birth and that the spiritual birth can only happen by God's Spirit.

HUMANS CAN REPRODUCE
ONLY HUMAN LIFE, BUT THE
HOLY SPIRIT GIVES BIRTH
TO SPIRITUAL LIFE.

—JOHN 3:6

Parents reproduce children but the Holy Spirit reproduces children of God. Salvation is something God does by His Spirit. This is something parents and guardians must remember. As much as you love

this child, you can not save them or give them a spiritual birth; if you try to force spiritual birth, you will be creating a false gospel where a child is responding to you and not the Holy Spirit. At the same time you must not be passive: God is inviting you to be an important part of the new birth God desires to bring about in your child's life.

Using the language of John 3, how does a parent help "birth" faith in the life of a child? The role of parent in the development of a child is in some ways similar to that of a midwife. Think about an experienced midwife and a brand new, first-time mom. The first-time mom has very little idea of what is going on, but the experienced midwife has been here before. The midwife is constantly checking for the signs of birth, attentive to the frequency and intensity of contractions. A midwife knows how to foster the birth process: sit on this, walk like this, get foot rubs here and here, breathe, relax, push now and not now. She is looking at the mom and checking the baby. She is up close, personal and attentive. She doesn't push but coaches the mom through it. She is gentle and nurturing but also experienced and wise, and she leads the new mom through

the whole process. She is not giving birth; she is leading the mom to new life.

As parents and guardians we are like a midwife. To aid in the spiritual birth of children, a parent/guardian is...

- » Experienced - they have been attentive to their own birth of faith
- » Present with the child.
- » Intimately involved – they see what is really going on.
- » Able to recognize the signs of life and birth

So what are the signs of spiritual birth? Let me give you a couple, but before I do, let me give you this warning: You are not pushing for a moment of repentance but a lifetime of repentance. Do not look for just a moment of faith but faith commitment. Faith is not just a moment: it is a lifestyle of many moments where your child will recognize their need for a Savior. Here are some signs of life to be looking for and to encourage:

Sensitivity to things of God

Like Nicodemus in John 3, is your child asking questions? Are they wanting to know more-is their heart soft and responsive, seeking things of God and his ways? One of my

favorite memories is my child being confronted with their own sin and they cried out, "But daddy I can't help it! I want to obey, but I just can't!" At that moment I knew I had a "gospel moment"- the chance to explain the fact that this is the precise reason why we need a Savior, someone to rescue us.

Remorse, grief, over sin In John 4 when Jesus was leading the thirsty woman to follow Him, He asked her about her particular sin. A sign of life is a child showing remorse or grief over sin. They are coming to understand the painful impact of their own rebellion on themselves, others or God.

Choice of others over self God defines love like this: "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Now a sign of life for your child is that, like Jesus, they start making choices to love others more than self.

The choice of others over self is an example of what theologians call "common grace." To some degree this ability to choose others over self is not limited to the Christian community. God has infused His beauty and grace into all aspects of creation. God has created us all to receive, experience and enjoy common grace. This is not a sign of salvation; it is a sign of having experienced a part of God so that we have the opportunity to know Him (Romans 1). However, this experience also comes with a responsibility: to respond to

the God that has shared this common grace with us. It is a sign of life, so be sure to look for it.

What are some ways to Foster the Birth Process through Gospel moments?

Tell your own Gospel story:

The more you are attentive to your heart journey, the more prepared you will be to enter into your child's. It is the pattern of Deuteronomy 6 that this is first on the heart of the parents, then taught to the child. Some notes on Gospel Fluency are included in the appendix. It is highly recommended that you review it and possibly take a course such as the Gospel Primer, Alpha or Baptism to help you pay attention to your Gospel story. This will train you to identify Gospel themes and will also help you learn how to tell your story. Hearing your story creates a living, breathing example of a follower of Jesus for your child.

Create a God-centered environment

in your relationship, where you first talk about your relationship with God. Regularly talk about God, His beauty and how following Him is the path of real life. Do it both formally and informally; informally is situational, but formal sets the stage for the informal. As you see signs of life, invite your child repeatedly to confession of sin and assurance of the grace of Jesus (1 John 1:9).

Know your child and develop the kind of relationship in which you talk about their heart, what motivates them and what they treasure. For this to be an option you have to be present with the person. This will be very difficult if you are not known and trusted. You need repeated times of work, rest and play together.

Remember the gift of boundaries. From the opening chapters of the Bible, God has been lovingly setting boundaries so that we would come to a knowledge of someone greater than ourselves who is leading, in charge and has our best interest at heart. Make sure in your home environment and relationship with your child that there are plenty of loving, clear boundaries with appropriate consequences for not adhering to each boundary. Spanking should not be the consequence for most violations of the boundaries. In most circumstances, spanking is an age-appropriate consequence, but only when used sparingly, deliberately and lovingly. The generic "time out" is not a specific enough consequence for most situations. Boundaries and consequences that lead our children well are necessary.

For example, if your seven-year-old son refuses to eat his broccoli because he can't stand the taste, then the consequence would be no dessert, no seconds on other parts of the meal or no snacks until the

healthy food has been eaten. We value being healthy more than eating what we like. If your nine-year-old daughter has not made her bed or cleaned her room, then she can't even watch an episode of "Little House." We value being responsible for what God has given us. If your ten-year-old son does poorly on his vocabulary test because he is not preparing throughout the week, then he loses the privilege of playing the Wii until he demonstrates a pattern of using his time to study instead of play. This consequence may last for weeks until you see consistent results on the vocabulary test, but that is ok because he is learning that in our house we value hard work and excellence in our education.

Be attentive to Gospel moments. They will come when your child crosses the boundary lines; you now have the opportunity to administer consequences. When they do what is wrong, children need to know there are negative consequences from loving authorities. This is the foundation for the good news of the Gospel, which starts with the bad news that there are consequences for our sin. It is this foundation that grace, forgiveness and mercy are built upon.

Earlier I told you of my child saying, "I want to obey, but I just can't." What they were saying was the entire point of the Old Testament; the people

General Principles in Setting Boundaries and Consequences

Use natural consequences. The punishment should be connected to the crime. Spanking or the generic time out for all infractions is insufficient because it is not connected to the violation of the boundary and therefore becomes just a punishment.

Natural consequences are designed as rescue missions to lead your child to live under your authority and within the boundary you have set up.

Natural consequences not only bring your child under your authority but at the same time reinforcing the Godly value you want the child to learn. All your boundaries should be driven by Godly values!

With maturity comes privilege. Your consequence is the removal of privileges they do not receive because they have not demonstrated the maturity to handle them. (Luke 16:10; 19:17)

Reread the examples given on this page and you will notice these general principles of setting boundaries of consequences at work in those examples.

had God's boundaries, but they couldn't live up to them. What my child needed, and what the people of Israel needed, was the good news of the New Covenant where Jesus takes the consequences of our sin and gives the Holy Spirit to help us walk in new paths of righteousness.

This is why the dinner table, cleaning your room, time in the back yard, being at the play ground, looking over school

work, resolving sibling conflicts and all other ways of spending time together are essential. They are ripe with Gospel opportunities.

Below is a passage from the book *Helping Children Understand the Gospel*, by Sally Michael, Jill Nelson and Bud Burk. They are on staff at John Piper's church in Minnesota, and between them they have decades of experience working with children and parents.

Here is what they say about presenting the Gospel to children:

"What is the Gospel and how do we present it in a way that can be clearly understood and embraced by children so that they may be saved? To begin with, there are three foundational themes we must understand:

First, God is the starting point of the Gospel. The message of the Gospel begins with God. He is the source of the Gospel—it was His sovereign plan from all eternity (II Timothy 1:8-10). When we present the Gospel to children we need to start with God, not with ourselves. He is both the founder and the foundation of the message.

Second, God is the vehicle of the Gospel. He Himself is the means by which the Gospel happens and is accomplished. Too many times children are presented with a Gospel that gives them the impression that it is ultimately their worth or their own decision that saves them—but this is not the case.

The central message and means of saving faith is focused on the Person and work of God's Son, Jesus—His worth, demonstrated in His perfect obedience, His substitutionary death and His glorious resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Even saving faith is ultimately brought about by God's decisive act in the human heart—it is a gift from Him, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:1-9).

Finally, God is the goal of the Gospel. Heaven is not the ultimate goal. Neither is sin forgiven the ultimate goal. Our happiness is not the ultimate goal of the Gospel. God is the goal: that His greatness and worth would be treasured most of all (Philippians 3:7-8; I Peter 2:9). The Gospel exists to bring us near to God so that we might trust, love, treasure, enjoy and worship Him forever. And yes, that God-centered and God-exalting goal does result in our ultimate and everlasting joy! (Psalm 16:11)"

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY OF COMMUNION

These chapters on the history of communion are designed to lay the foundation for a child's understanding of the Gospel and the elements of a communion service.

To understand communion it is necessary to understand the history behind the celebration. In order to understand what Jesus did in the New Testament, it is necessary to understand what happened in the Old Testament.



“INDEED, UNDER THE LAW ALMOST EVERYTHING IS PURIFIED WITH BLOOD, AND WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS OF SINS.”

HEBREWS 9:22

1. From the beginning of time God has told us that without the _____ shedding of blood _____ there is no _____ forgiveness of sin _____.

The shedding of blood is called a sacrifice, and sacrifice brings forgiveness.

DRAW A PICTURE OF FORGIVENESS

Use their drawing to assess what they understand about forgiveness and to affirm the themes of wrong being done but grace being offered.

“IT IS THE LORD’S PASSEVER. FOR I WILL PASS THROUGH THE LAND OF EGYPT THAT NIGHT, AND I WILL STRIKE ALL THE FIRSTBORN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, BOTH MAN AND BEAST; AND ON ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENTS: I AM THE LORD. THE BLOOD SHALL BE A SIGN FOR YOU, ON THE HOUSES WHERE YOU ARE. AND WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU, AND NO PLAGUE WILL BEFALL YOU TO DESTROY YOU, WHEN I STRIKE THE LAND OF EGYPT.”



EXODUS 12:11-131.

2. The Egyptians were keeping God’s people as slaves. He punished the Egyptians while rescuing His people. He told His people to place _____ blood _____ on the doorpost of their house, and when He saw the blood He would _____ pass over _____ that house. That was God’s _____ punishment _____ for Egypt and His _____ rescue _____ for His people because after that Pharaoh of Egypt let them go free.



You have learned that the shedding of blood brings forgiveness of sin. Now you will learn that the shedding of blood also brings rescue. In the Old Testament there are two pictures of how sacrifice brings forgiveness and rescue from sin. The first picture is the Passover meal.

Those who had the blood on their doorpost were rescued — they were set free, but those who did not were punished.

You have learned already that the shedding of blood brings
_____ forgiveness _____ and _____ rescue _____. In the Old Testament
the _____ priest _____ offered sacrifices on behalf of the people.



The point of this exercise is to affirm or correct the understanding of rescue. The simple point is that someone or something cannot save themselves; they need to be rescued. Do not try to equate God with Luke Skywalker or Simba. The point is to ensure they understand the concept of rescue.

“AARON’S SONS THE PRIESTS SHALL
BRING THE BLOOD AND THROW
THE BLOOD AGAINST
THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR
THAT IS AT THE ENTRANCE
OF THE TENT OF MEETING.”

LEVITICUS 1:5

Every time the people in the Old Testament offered their sacrifice they remembered how much they need God. They were reminded that the shedding of blood brings forgiveness and rescue.

CAN YOU TELL A STORY FROM A BOOK OR A MOVIE ABOUT A RESCUE?

Guide them into seeing the justice of God in demanding a sacrifice but also the great love of God in providing a substitute sacrifice.

MAKE IT PERSONAL: IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, HOW IS GOD BOTH A FAIR, GOOD JUDGE AND ALSO A VERY LOVING FATHER?

We want them to start seeing both the judgement and grace of God over their personal sin.

HOW DO YOU THINK GOD FEELS ABOUT YOUR SIN?

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY OF COMMUNION (PART 1)

You have learned already that the shedding of blood brings

forgiveness and rescue. The New Testament tells us

about Jesus and how He was the greatest sacrifice that brought these two things:

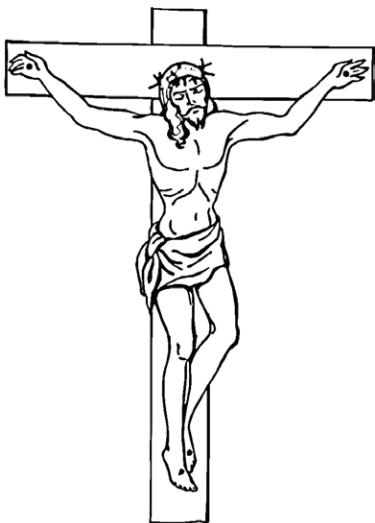
1. The priest no longer needs to sacrifice. The priest offered sacrifices repeatedly that can never take away sins. However, in the New Testament Jesus becomes the single sacrifice that brings forgiveness and rescue. That means that His sacrifice was the ultimate sacrifice and the priest doesn't need to sacrifice any more.

AND EVERY PRIEST STANDS DAILY AT HIS SERVICE, OFFERING REPEATEDLY THE SAME SACRIFICES, WHICH CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY SINS. BUT WHEN CHRIST HAD OFFERED FOR ALL TIME A SINGLE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.



HEBREWS 10:11-12

HOW WAS JESUS' SACRIFICE BETTER THAN ALL OTHER SACRIFICES?



His sacrifice was a single sacrifice for all time, and it takes away sins.

2. Jesus led the first communion time. He did this to give us a way to always remember His sacrifice for sin. Circle the items in the verse that Jesus used as symbols of His sacrifice.

The child should circle bread and cup. We will get into the richness of those symbols later. Tell the child that Jesus' life was a sacrifice. Just like the animals of the Old Testament, Jesus was a sacrifice that brings both forgiveness and rescue.



AND AS THEY WERE EATING, HE TOOK BREAD, AND AFTER BLESSING IT BROKE IT AND GAVE IT TO THEM, AND SAID, "TAKE; THIS IS MY BODY." AND HE TOOK A CUP, AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS HE GAVE IT TO THEM, AND THEY ALL DRANK OF IT. AND HE SAID TO THEM, "THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, WHICH IS POURED OUT FOR MANY.

Mk. 14:22-24

Make it personal: According to the Bible, sacrifices bring forgiveness and rescue.

You may need to remind the child of times when they have sinned and needed forgiveness. Please let the child know that their sin was not just against another person but also against God, the maker of the person they sinned against.

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY TIMES IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU NEEDED FORGIVENESS?

What you are looking for in this answer is your child's heart being soft toward the person and work of Jesus.

HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF JESUS OUR SINS CAN BE TAKEN AWAY FROM US?

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY OF COMMUNION (PART 2)

3. Early Christians took communion. Take your Bible and look up Acts 2:42 and fill in the blanks.

“AND THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES
TO THE APOSTLES’ TEACHING AND
THE FELLOWSHIP, TO THE breaking
OF bread AND THE PRAYERS.”



4. Throughout history all Jesus’ followers have observed communion. We do it to remember Jesus. Using I Cor. 11:24-25, fill in the blanks:

... AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE
broke IT, AND SAID, “THIS IS MY body
WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU. DO THIS IN
remembrance OF ME. IN THE SAME WAY
ALSO HE TOOK THE cup AFTER SUPPER,
SAYING, “THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT
IN MY blood. DO THIS, AS OFTEN AS YOU
drink IT, IN memory OF ME.”



Jesus never said how often to do this, so some churches do it every week and others once a month. Special occasions like Christmas and Easter are also times when churches may celebrate communion.

Remember: how often you take communion is not as important as what communion means.



“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 HE
TOOK THE CUP AFTER THEY HAD
EATEN, SAYING, “THIS CUP THAT
IS POURED OUT FOR YOU IS THE
NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD.”

LUKE 22:19, 20

You may need to clarify that the blood of the sacrifice is symbolized by wine in the cup. The concept of “symbol” may need some explanation also. A symbol is something that helps you remember something else (my ring is a symbol of my marriage, etc).

DRAW A PICTURE OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP.

This question is designed to help you assess their understanding of the symbols of communion and the death of Jesus.

MAKE IT PERSONAL: HOW DOES COMMUNION HELP YOU REMEMBER JESUS' SACRIFICE?

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT COMMUNION? (PART 1)

Communion is meaningful because it is a symbol of our relationship with Jesus.

During Communion we REMEMBER That Jesus died.

WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS WOULD WANT US TO REMEMBER HIS DEATH?
(SEE ROMANS 5:8, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3)

Jesus demonstrated by His death His commitment to God and His love for us. Communion is a time of reflecting on Jesus' love for His Father and for us. It is the greatest moment in human history, and like all other great moments, it is worth remembering.

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT
THE FREE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE
IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

ROMANS 6:23



1. Communion is a special time to remember why we all need Jesus.

a. What is sin?

- i. Sin is not obeying the laws of God in action or attitude.
- ii. Sin is not only a disobedience to God's laws but, even worse, a rejection of God Himself

READ GENESIS 3:1-13

- b. Write down an example of when you have sinned.
- c. What are “wages”? Do you know anyone who receives wages for their work?
- d. According to Romans 6:23, what are the wages of sin?
- e. What is Death?

Death is the loss of life. Biblically it is both physical and spiritual. Plants, animals, and people all physically die. It is spiritual as well because our spirits were made to be in communion with God, but when we sin we are cut off from the relationship with God. That is our spiritual death.

Death is a loss of relationship with God.

Death is total depravity, which means your heart is continually rebellious against God and you are unable to fix your broken relationship with Him. Romans 7:18 “I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.”

We need Jesus because the payment for my sin is death

- f. Circle the part of Romans 6:23 that tells us why we all need Jesus.

Pain, suffering, sadness—they could describe when someone is mad at them or they are mad at someone.

MAKING IT PERSONAL: WHAT DOES A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE?

It hurts

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP?

HOW DO YOU THINK GOD FEELS HAVING A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE HE HAS MADE?

The goal here is to get to the compassion of God which leads to His deliverance.

REMEMBER WE ALL HAVE REBELLED AGAINST GOD. GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE TOLD TO DO SOMETHING AND YOU REFUSED.

WHAT DOES GOD DO ABOUT YOUR SIN?

You want them to personalize the cross-
Jesus died for me!

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT COMMUNION? (PART 2)

Grace

1. Communion is a special way to thank Jesus.

- a. What can you be thankful for during communion? Write down at least 1 thing. If you need help, look at Ephesians 2:8,9.
- b. Pray and thank Jesus. Express how much we need Jesus.



“LET A PERSON EXAMINE HIMSELF,
THEN, AND SO EAT OF THE BREAD
AND DRINK OF THE CUP.”

I COR. 11:28

2. According to 1 Corinthians 11:28, what should we remember to do when we take communion?

a. Communion is a special time to remind us to pay attention to what is in our heart.

b. What is our heart?

Our heart is the place of our decisions, plans and emotions. It determines why we do the things we do. (example: getting back at people; he hurt me I hurt him back, tell a lie, etc.) The heart causes you to sin.

A good motive for communion is to help us not to forget our need for Jesus. How do we know if we pass the test? Looking at motives tests our heart. Does it mean we have to be perfect to take communion? Does confessing mean we are in trouble if we miss any of our sin? No. You remember how much you need Jesus; that is how you pass the test. Read I Corinthians 11:28 from The Message: “*Examine your motives, test your heart, come to this meal in holy awe.*”

CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER:

Before we take communion we should:

- a. Talk to a friend about sin
- b. Make sure we didn't eat something
- c. Test our heart

Read the stories of people who remembered their sin:

Luke 15:11-32 The Prodigal

Luke 23:39-43 The thief on the cross

Mark 5:24-34 The woman who touched the hem of Jesus' clothes

Luke 5:17-26 The Man lowered through the roof

Make it personal...

CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU REMEMBERED YOUR SIN AND THEN
CONFESSED IT TO A TEACHER OR YOUR PARENT?

CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU REMEMBERED YOUR SIN AND YOU
CONFESSED IT TO GOD?

IS THERE ANY SIN THAT YOU HAVE COMMITTED THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO
CONFESS TO GOD AND ASK FOR HIS FORGIVENESS? IF SO, BE HONEST AND TELL
HIM YOUR SIN AND THEN ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOU.

READ 1 JOHN 1:9 AND WRITE DOWN HOW GOD RESPONDS TO OUR CONFESSION OF SIN.

WAYS TO OBSERVE COMMUNION

The exact way a church takes communion is not as important as what communion means. Many churches serve communion differently; it could be at different times in the Sunday service and sometimes in different locations.

In preparation for taking communion, pastors, elders and church leaders will remind people of why Jesus died and why they need Him.

Some churches use trays of cups and plates of crackers or bread. Others may use a cup filled with grape juice or wine and a portion of a loaf of bread that people break off pieces of or small pieces that are cut ahead of time.

In some churches everyone waits to take communion at the same time, while in others they let people take communion on their own or as a family.

Make it personal...

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOU SEEN COMMUNION BEING TAKEN?

WHAT DO THE BREAD AND JUICE MEAN?

“FOR I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD WHAT I ALSO DELIVERED TO YOU, THAT THE LORD JESUS ON THE NIGHT WHEN HE WAS BETRAYED TOOK BREAD, AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT, AND SAID, ‘THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU. DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’ IN THE SAME WAY ALSO HE TOOK THE CUP, AFTER SUPPER, SAYING, ‘THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD. DO THIS, AS OFTEN AS YOU DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’”



I COR. 11:23-25

Bread and juice are not special in and of themselves. They may be just like the bread and juice you have at home.

According to what Jesus said, the bread stands for His body that was nailed to the cross and the juice pictures the blood that flowed from Jesus' wounds when He died on the cross.



Make it personal...

Read John 6:53 and answer the two questions below. "Unless you eat the flesh of the son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

You want your children to understand the blood leads to forgiveness for sin and being made pure and whole. Because of the shedding of blood we are restored to relationship with God.

IF THE BREAD REPRESENTS THE BROKEN BODY OF CHRIST, WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT HIS BODY BEING BROKEN?

You want to lead your children to understand Jesus as our substitute. His body was broken instead of ours; He took our sin.

IF THE CUP REPRESENTS THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?

Because of this significance you can see why communion is a very serious time.

WHO CAN TAKE COMMUNION?

READ LUKE 22:7-20.

Jesus wanted to serve them the Passover meal; He wanted them to experience communion. In Luke 22:7-20, how does Luke demonstrate that Jesus wanted them to take communion?

Verse 8: He sent his disciples to prepare for it.

Verse 15: He earnestly desired to eat it with them.

Verses 19 & 20: He gave it to them and told them it was for them.

Make it personal...

Jesus is eager for us to take communion. But who can take communion?

First, our communion time is open to all present, including children. However, since children are under the authority of their parents, we leave it up to parents to make the decision for their children.

ASK YOUR PARENT OR GUARDIAN IF THEY TAKE COMMUNION AND WHY?

Second, communion is open to anyone who is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and the fulfillment of all His promises to us (which includes eternal life).

TELL YOUR PARENT OR GUARDIAN WHAT JESUS HAS DONE TO DEAL WITH YOUR SIN AGAINST GOD.

DRAW A PICTURE OF YOU FOLLOWING, OBEYING OR WORSHIPING JESUS.

WRITE THE NAME OF SOMEONE 10-20 YEARS OLDER THAN YOU THAT IS FOLLOWING, OBEYING OR WORSHIPING JESUS.

WRITE THE NAME OF SOMEONE 20-40 YEARS OLDER THAN YOU FOLLOWING, OBEYING OR WORSHIPING JESUS.

SINCE COMMUNION IS A CELEBRATION OF YOUR LIFE-LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS, GIVE EXAMPLES OF HOW PEOPLE THAT ARE OLDER THAN YOU FOLLOW, OBEY AND WORSHIP JESUS.

TELL YOUR PARENT OR GUARDIAN WHY YOU WANT TO TAKE COMMUNION.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Dad and Mom: Let your child do this review quiz on their own. Then go over it with them.

Circle The Correct Answer.

1. Communion was started when
 - A. Peter became the leader of the early church
 - B. Jesus observed it with his disciples before He died
 - C. The early church leaders invented a way to remember Jesus
2. One Bible passage that tells what communion means is
 - A. Psalm 23
 - B. Ephesians 6
 - C. I Corinthians 11
3. Communion is a time to remember what?
 - A. Jesus' baptism
 - B. Jesus' death
 - C. Jesus' resurrection
4. What food do we use in communion?
 - A. Cookies and milk
 - B. Pretzels and soda
 - C. Bread and grape juice
5. What does the bread represent?
 - A. Jesus' body
 - B. How God provides food for us
 - C. Stones
6. What does the juice represent?
 - A. The living water
 - B. The Red Sea
 - C. The blood of Jesus

7. Communion is serious, so what should we be doing?
 - A. Talking quietly
 - B. Thinking about Jesus' wounded and bleeding body
 - C. Doing homework
8. A child is ready to take communion when
 - A. They understand its significance
 - B. They can give an honest testimony of having put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin
 - C. They consciously intend to follow the Lord in all areas of their lives
 - D. All of the above
9. Communion is sometimes called
 - A. The Lord's Prayer
 - B. The Lord's Supper
 - C. The Fruit of the Spirit
10. Pastors prepare people's hearts for communion by
 - A. Reminding them why Jesus died and why they need Him
 - B. Shaking hands with everyone
 - C. Calling the servers up

A Final Word to the Parent(s):

You may still be asking yourself, "How do I know if my child's ready for communion?" There is no test to take or class to attend to help establish readiness. We leave it up to parents to decide.

We would like to suggest to parents the following three guidelines to help you determine if your child is ready.

1. In an age-appropriate way they can explain the significance of communion. Your child does not need to use big words or talk like a professional in order to explain the simple but life-changing truth that Jesus died to take the punishment for their sin.
2. In an age-appropriate way they are able to give a credible profession of having put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Their understanding of sin needs to be concrete. Sin needs to go beyond a concept of a thing God hates; they have to have seen and felt the weight of their own failure and rebellion. Sin is not just an idea- it is what they did.
3. Are they consciously intending to follow the Lord in all areas of their lives? Can you see a desire

for God, a softness toward God and His ways? Are they making choices to do what is right, especially when it conflicts with their own desires? Can you identify times of seeking God?

WARNING FROM A DAD: I remember at times having such a narrow definition of worship (what it means to follow God) that I was missing clear evidence of the Spirit of God. I was concerned that my child's faith was limited to obedience to her parents; that it wasn't expressive enough in certain ways. So I set up an expectation of what it would look like for my child to really follow Jesus. However, my definition was narrow and limited. Thankfully I shared it with my wife, and she was able to point out many places where my child was already showing great signs of faith and worship. This is a caution to be talking to other people as you are interpreting your child's heart.

Now that you have worked through this booklet here are some next steps: work through this booklet with your child making sure they do much of the work. You're there to guide them. When your child finishes the booklet:

1. Contact the Family Ministries coordinator. They can help connect you with a pastor or elder who can join you for your child's first communion to pray for your family.
2. If your child has not observed a communion service, have them sit with you on a communion Sunday to see how it's done.
3. Pick a communion Sunday to have your child's first communion.
4. Communicate with family and friends who will share in your excitement about what is going to take place. Ask them to join you that day to celebrate with you and your child.
5. Plan a time afterward to celebrate with friends and family and to talk about what communion is all about.

Gospel Fluency

For a parent, it is important to develop something called Gospel fluency. It is where you start to think and speak based on the great realities of the Gospel. This will help you go deeper into the freedom of the Gospel, and it will also help you to lead your children into a life commitment of following Jesus based on their need for the Gospel in their everyday lives. Start with “listening with Gospel ears”, “believing Gospel truth” and “looking for evidence of Gospel impact”. Much of this material was gleaned from the book *The Gospel Primer* by Caesar Kalinowski.

Developing Gospel Ears

To develop Gospel fluency you will need to start listening with Gospel ears. Through words, conversations and your own affections or emotional outbursts, you can start to see evidence of false gospels with their false saviors. The Father would call you to repent of your false gospels and their counterfeit saviors. There are many more, but here are 4 that are common and a good place to start.

Four evidences of false saviors. When I see evidence of...

1. **Control** I have rejected that God is great.
If God is great I don't have to be in control (Romans 1:21-24)
2. **Fear** I have rejected God is glorious.
If God is glorious I don't have to fear that something or someone else will be seen as glorious (Is. 48:10-12; Deut 20:3,4; 31:6; Jer 2:11)
3. **Greed** (I am continually dissatisfied and striving) I have rejected God is good.
If God is good I don't have to look elsewhere for my satisfaction (Gen 3:6; Psalm 23:1; Jer 2:12,13)
4. **Performance** (my pattern is that I must perform well to feel safe, loved and valued) I have rejected that God is gracious.
If God is gracious I don't have to prove myself (to myself, others or God)(Galatians 5:1)

Believing Gospel Truth

To develop Gospel fluency I will need to start believing Gospel truths. The most important thing that happened to me was on the cross of Jesus, and in order to embrace the Gospel I must fight for faith in Gospel reality.

Four Gospel truths (there are many more but here are 4). Because of the perfect life, sacrificial death and eternal resurrection of Jesus, we are...

1. Completely saved from the penalty of our sin, given a more abundant life now, and eternal life with God. That's **salvation**.
2. Declared right with God because of Jesus' perfect life exchanged for ours. That's **justification**.
3. Children fully loved and accepted by our Father, made part of his forever family. That's **adoption**.
4. Becoming more like Jesus as we begin to live out what is now true of us in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's **sanctification**.

Gospel Impact

To embrace the Gospel is to reject false gospels and entrust ourselves to a new Gospel with Jesus as my Savior. However, Jesus is not only a Savior but He is a King to be followed and is leading us into a new way of living in His Kingdom. There are 4 new patterns that will emerge as we live by the Spirit that dwells with us. (There are many more but here are 4)

Four results of Gospel: Because the Holy Spirit lives in me I...

1. Do not have to live with guilt or shame over my past sins or present areas of my life that God is still working on. I have been given a totally new life in Christ! Therefore, I extend forgiveness and grace to others with great courage and flexibility. This is **salvation**.
2. Do not need to control others' opinions of me or try to impress God with my spirituality since the Father now sees Jesus' perfect life and status when He looks at me. Therefore, I can live with deep humility, yet much gratitude, confidence and joy. This is **justification**.
3. Have nothing to earn because I'm already fully loved, approved and valued by my Father. Therefore, I can be fully present in the circumstances of life in order to love and serve all people, even my enemies, with no strings attached. This is **adoption**.
4. Do not need to look to anything else for identity and purpose since I have been reborn by the Holy

Spirit. Therefore, I can re-orient my whole life around the mission of Jesus to make disciples. This is **sanctification**.