



## **DON'T SPILL THE GRAPE JUICE**

### **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER**

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### **MINISTRY DIRECTION**

The Lord's Supper is one of God's most wonderful gifts to His people. Jesus made very special arrangements for this Passover meal with his friends, for He knew it would be His last meal with them. As Jesus and his disciples were relaxing around the table, Jesus said, "With all my heart I have looked forward to eating this meal with you, before I have to suffer." A little later, he took a loaf of bread and said a prayer of thanks and broke it open. "This is to remind you of my body – given for you," he said. "Do this so you will remember me." He did the same thing with a cup filled with the wine, telling them to remember His blood would pay the price for their sins forever.

A broken loaf of bread. Wine. Simple things really. But thousands of years later Christians all over the world are taking a small bite of bread and drinking juice from a cup. We have not forgotten the One who gave His life so we could live. We remember and we are thankful.

### ***WHY DID JESUS INSTITUTE A MEAL LIKE THIS?***

We are intensely physical people. We access everything in life through our physical senses. How can we, who have such a weak capacity for belief and trust in God to begin with, be encouraged to follow a God we cannot see, hear, taste, smell or touch? The Lord's Supper is a key way in which Christ addresses this difficulty. Through the supper, the Spirit of God engages us as we partake of physical food and drink. We are given the opportunity to experience, with all five senses, the objects that represent to us the broken body and shed blood of Christ.

### ***PREPARATION FOR THE TABLE***

The Bible encourages us to prepare for the table by examining ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28). The purpose of the examination is not to find enough righteousness in ourselves to make us worthy. Rather, the purpose of the examination is:

- to confess and repent of all known sins in thought, word and deed;
- to acknowledge again that we cannot save ourselves from God's wrath against sin;
- to acknowledge that our only hope for salvation is in Jesus Christ;

- to forsake all alternative paths to salvation and re-embrace Christ alone as our Savior;
- to acknowledge God's saving love for one, unified people by being reconciled to and honoring all other members of Christ's covenant people.

The Lord's Supper is one of the tender ways in which God looks to strengthen and nourish our feeble faith. He knows our hearts are quick to doubt the goodness and truth of the Gospel. He knows that our faith is always a mixture of belief and unbelief.

Thankfully, he gives us something we can see, hear, taste, smell and touch as a pledge of His saving love and faithfulness to us. The message of the Lord's Table is the same as the message of the Bible: God saves sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Robert Bruce, a Scottish minister during the 16th Century said, "The Word leads us to Christ by the ear: the Sacraments lead us to Christ by the eye and by the mouth and by the hand. But it is to the same Christ we are led. We do not get a better Christ in the Sacrament. But we may get Christ better by taking it." Jesus Christ has been given to us in both Word and Sacrament. Let us join the feast!

## **IDEAS YOU CAN USE**

### ***A Special Dinner With Jesus***

*Even very young children can understand the message of the Last Supper/Communion Service, if the time is taken to explain it to them in a simple manner. Below is an interactive way to tell the story - you may like to use it to create for children their own special Communion Service.*

#### **Materials**

- Small table
- Lace tablecloth
- Candles
- Bottle of Grape Juice
- Tray with flat bread

#### **Story**

Does your mom ever make you a special dinner? Who likes to go out to a restaurant for a special meal? What sort of things do you like to eat? *(Allow time for children to respond to your questions)*

Our story today is about a special dinner that Jesus had with his friends. Now, this dinner wasn't going to be just an ordinary dinner, but a very special meal where Jesus would tell his friends how much he loved them. I want you to pretend today that you are one of Jesus' friends going to the special dinner with Jesus.

Jesus had asked his friends to find him a large room. So two of his friends went into town and asked a man to help them. *(You may like to single out two children to act this*

out.) This man took them to a guest room that was upstairs in his house. In the room they had to make every thing ready for the special dinner. Can you help me get things ready for the special dinner? *(Have children help place a lace cloth on a small table. Set with candles, silver tray, bread, pitcher for the drink, etc. Also have prepared a small bowl with a towel)*

Now everything was ready for the special meal. Jesus' friends had traveled a long way to come to this special meal. Have you traveled a long way to get here today? Who came here by bus? Who came here by airplane? Who came here by car? Who walked here today? *(Allow time for children to answer and respond accordingly to their answers)*

Well, Jesus' friends had walked a long, long way to go to Jesus' special dinner. Their feet were dirty and they were very tired. *(If they have not already done so invite all the children to come and sit around the table.)* They all sat down around the table and waited for someone to come and wash their feet. Now this was usually the job of a servant but Jesus was the one who came round and washed their feet. *(As you tell this part of the story, go round and pretend to wash the feet of the children.)*

Jesus' friends were really surprised. Jesus should not be washing their feet. But Jesus said to them, "I washed your feet to tell you that I love you. I want you to remember this and show my love to others."

Then Jesus began to give his friends the special meal. First, he prepared some bread. *(As you tell this part of the story, pass around a small portion of bread for each child.)* Jesus thanked God for the bread and gave the bread to each of his special friends. Then Jesus said to his friends, "When you eat this bread, I want you to remember that I love you."

After they had all finished eating Jesus prepared juice for them to drink. *(As you tell this part of the story, pour a small glass of juice for each child)* Jesus thanked God for the juice, just as he had thanked him for the bread. Then Jesus poured the grape juice for his friends and gave it to them. As they were drinking, Jesus said to them again, "I want you to remember that I love you."

Why do you think Jesus wanted them to remember that he loved them? *(Allow time for answers)* Well, not only was this meal a very special dinner, but it was also the very last time Jesus ate with his friends before he died and rose again. He wanted them to understand and remember that no matter what happened Jesus would always love them. So even today we take time to eat bread and drink juice. And as we do, we remember how much Jesus loves us.

### ***Last Supper Song***

(To the tune of "Jesus Loves Me")

This loaf of bread reminds me of  
A Sacrifice so full of love  
A drink of grape juice from the vine  
In memory of His love divine.

I will remember, I will remember, I will remember  
The price that Jesus paid.

### ***Communicating with Jesus***

Object Needed: Cell Phone

Scripture verse: A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. I Corinthians 11:28

Is there anyone here who has not used a cell phone? Well I brought one with me this morning in order to show you something. Who would you like to call on this phone? (Let the children share.) There is only one problem though, I don't have reception here at the church, and I just can't get a signal.

In order for us to talk with someone else on the phone, certain conditions must be met. First, and most important, our phone must be working. But now let's pretend this phone is working. What are some other conditions that must be met before we can talk to someone else on this cell phone? (You have to dial the right number; the other person must be near a phone, etc.) So then, a number of conditions must be met before we can talk with someone else on the phone.

We are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper today. Jesus told us to do this as a way of communicating with Him. In fact, sometimes we call the Lord's Supper "Communion". But in order to really communicate with God when we participate in the Lord's Supper, certain conditions must be met.

First, we must believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Second, we must examine (or look at) ourselves. We must be sorry for our sins, we must be willing to forgive all those who have hurt us, and we must want to live as we know Jesus wants us to live.

When we do all this, then we are ready to participate in the Lord's Supper. We are ready to receive God's wonderful communication of love.

### ***The Hope of His Return***

Object Needed: Picture of a Spaceship Landing

Whenever a spaceship blasts off the launch pad, we eagerly watch as far as the TV cameras can follow it. Then we begin looking forward to its return. Each progress report from the astronauts in space gives us hope of seeing them again. As the time draws near for the landing, excitement increases. There is an attitude of joyous expectancy, especially among the co-workers, relatives, and friends of the crew who look forward to their return.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, His watching disciples heard two angels say, "Why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" Acts 1:11, NIV.

At the Lord's Supper we remember the cross where Jesus died for our sins so that we can have forgiveness and eternal life. We also look forward to when Jesus will return. (Read I Corinthians 11:26, "For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.")

With the promise that Christ will return in glorious victory, we now take the bread and the juice representing His love for us. At the same time we are expressing our eager anticipation for the second coming of our King.

***Responsive Reading: "Celebration!"***

**Leader:** Come to the Lord's Table! As we eat the bread and drink the juice we remember what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross.

**Children:** We come to eat at the Lord's Table because we need all that Jesus has for us.

**Leader:** Come to the Lord's Table. He died on the cross so that you could be forgiven of sins.

**Children:** We do not come to the Lord's Table because we are good. We come because we are forgiven.

**Leader:** He is here as He promised! Come let us celebrate!