



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Matthew 26: 17-30 – The Last Supper

Theme: Sharing and remembering together as God's people

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

The Last Supper is the final meal that, in the Gospel accounts, Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion. It is described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and is also referenced in the first letter to the Corinthians. It takes place at the time of the Jewish Passover, or Pesach (Hebrew) which commemorates the story of Exodus when Moses led the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt.

There is a parallel between passover, the last supper and holy communion which are all about remembering and being drawn together in community through that shared remembering. Through the symbolic meals, those sharing in them look back at the history which has had an impact on their lives, look to the present of being gathered together, and look to the future that is to come in God's kingdom.

In Holy Communion or the Eucharist, we remember the last supper and Jesus' life, death and resurrection, not only as something in the past but also as something that affects us here and now and assures us for the future.

It may be useful to read about what the URC believes about communion on this page: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-believe/> before this session. Remember that different churches commemorate this in different ways and may hold differing beliefs about communion. It is important to respect these and not to insist on only one interpretation. Some churches set conditions on who may take communion – e.g. age, baptised, confirmed etc. The United Reformed Church generally operates an open table, meaning that anyone can take communion who wishes to. We are sharing a meal as children of God. Please note that the exploration section of this



session retells the story with the children taking the role of disciples – they will eat bread and drink juice together but will not be actually taking communion and you should be explicit that they are just acting out a story. While children are welcome at the communion table, this should be their choice and their parents/guardians choice and communion is led by an authorised person within the URC.

Be aware of people who may have unpleasant or sad memories who might find a session on remembering difficult. It is important to acknowledge that we can have good memories and bad memories and hold on to the fact that we have both – it's OK to have sad memories too. This story is about remembering sad/bad and good memories from Passover and from the Easter story, which are far from simply happy events. Note how part of the Passover meal includes salt water and bitter herbs for the tears of slavery.

In the allocated passage this week, the section about Judas has been omitted. This was a deliberate decision, not because it is a difficult part of the story, but because it distracts from the aspects of the story that this session centres upon. You can find materials on Judas in our Easter Special and in the Families on Faith Adventures @ Home Easter Special.

Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen



In-person game – Last Supper Kim's Game

Lay out items on a tray that might have been part of the last supper - it could be things like a goblet/wine glass, plate, jug, bread roll/pitta bread, grapes, water, bowl, towel, olives and wine. These are just ideas and you can add as many items as you like. Although we do not know exactly what was eaten, dates and herbs could quite possibly have been included.

Ask the children to look carefully for about 30 seconds and then remove the tray. Ask them how many items they can remember. Another way of playing the game is, after the 30 seconds, to cover the tray with a cloth. Secretly take one item away and then reveal the tray again and ask the children to spot what is missing.

Alternative game

Hidden treasure

As part of Passover celebrations, many families will play a game for younger children - finding items that contain yeast which have been hidden around the house. After the thorough cleaning to remove all raising agents from the house, children will search to find the 'last' items that have been hidden. When the items have been found they are exchanged for money or a reward.

- Hide bread rolls or small items such as play figures or toy animals.
- Your group could be split into teams or play individually, to find as many hidden items as they can in a set amount of time.
- Reward your group with stickers or a reward when they have found the hidden items.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the New Life Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A+17-19%2C+26-30&version=NLV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: From the Read and Share Bible <https://youtu.be/KywnAfLnOxw?t=36>

Over fives: The Servant King from the Jesus Story Book Bible <https://youtu.be/PRw-rW8LU5k?t=250>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: God so loved the world (simple version) <https://youtu.be/-uianSSDaxc>

Over fives: God So loved the world <https://youtu.be/TV55YtyqTT0>

Explore



Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A way to explore the story together

You will need a loaf of unsliced bread or a flatbread, a bottle of diluted blackcurrent juice or grape juice, and a cup.

Sit in a circle to tell this story

The city was bustling with people gathering to share the Passover meal together. It was a special time: a time of remembering, a time of sharing, a time to look back and a time to look forward together. A time of what has been and a time of what is to come.

And at this time, Jesus and his disciples gathered too. A room was ready for them and they gathered around a table to eat.

They had shared so much together over the last three years. So much laughter and so many adventures, things that had amazed them, confused them, strengthened and encouraged them. What a team they had become. They had walked together, talked together, gone fishing together, eaten together – and here they were, sharing together again. I wonder what they talked about around that table? I wonder what they ate and drank together and what tales they had to tell? Do you remember when we...

If the group can remember any stories of Jesus and the disciples, they could share them now, with single sentences starting "Do you remember when we....", for example "Do you remember when we caught more fish than our nets could hold?" and "Do you remember when we were in a crowded house and someone was lowered down through the roof?"

It suddenly fell quiet as Jesus picked up the bread on the table. Something special was about to happen. All eyes were upon him. Let's see what it was like to be sitting in that room and eating with Jesus.

Either the storyteller or an allocated person representing Jesus should pick up the loaf and, as the story is told, break it and pass it around so that everyone can have a piece and eat it. (Be aware in advance whether any children are gluten intolerant or coeliac and have a gluten-free alternative available for them, or use gluten-free for everyone)

God loved the world so much, Jesus explained, that I was born as a baby so I could be just like you and you could get to know God by getting to know me. I have a body that you can see and touch, just like you are seeing and touching this bread. Bread will be a reminder for you that I was here with you. I have to die so that I can return to heaven and wait for you there but when you eat bread, you will remember me and you can look forward to all I have in store for you.

I wonder what it was like to have Jesus there in person? I wonder if the disciples believed he wouldn't be with them much longer?

Then Jesus picked up a glass of wine from the table. What would happen next?

Either the storyteller or an allocated person representing Jesus should pick up the juice and, as the story is told, pour it into cups and pass them around so that everyone can drink some.

God loved the world so much, Jesus explained, that God wanted everyone to have a chance to be part of the family. The old way wasn't working so I was sent into the world to live and die to give everyone a fresh start. The new promise means nobody has to earn their way into God's family or be someone special – the promise is for everyone that wants it, no matter who they are. As we drink together now, remember that I will die and my blood will be spilled out of my body, but that it isn't the end. That promise means I will be waiting in heaven to have a wonderful feast with you one day because that love means you will be



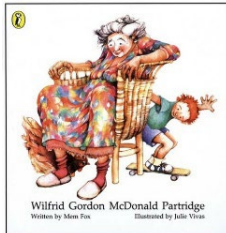
there with me. So whenever you drink, remember me and look forward to all I have in store for you.

I wonder what it will be like to share a feast with Jesus in heaven one day?

It feels like the end of the meal but it's only the beginning. We can share as God's children in a special meal to remember him, our forever friend.

Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge' by Mem Fox

<https://youtu.be/6dLCKYTbR5c?si=xKFSiYjWE5zDci5v>

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- What tastes, smells, things, events help you remember special people or events of the past?
- What makes a meal special – how is it different from an ordinary meal?
- How do you think the disciples might have been feeling when Jesus told them this meal would be a way of remembering his life and death?
- What things in our daily life help us to remember or think about God or Jesus?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what your favourite food is for a special meal?
- I wonder what meal you'd like to share with Jesus?
- I wonder what is your favourite memory?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- A wooden goblet with some red juice – talk to the children about the colour of the 'wine' and that Jesus drank wine with his friends at their last meal together before he died.
- A wooden plate with play bread or a flatbread – the bread is broken and shared, this helps us to remember Jesus came for us all, and we all remember him by sharing that bread and wine.
- A cross – a cross helps us to remember Jesus died on the cross for us. That is very sad, but it is also wonderful, in an Easter kind of way, because he reaches out his arms to us wherever we are.
- A heart – this special supper is a reminder of how much Jesus loves us and how much we love Jesus.
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Breaking Bread Intercessions

You will need a large bread roll (or rolls, depending on numbers) to pass round your group, and a gluten free option on a *separate* plate for those who are not able to eat bread.

Get everyone to sit in a circle and pass the bread around the circle. Ask everyone to tear off a small piece and hold it in their hand. As you hold the bread, think about people who live in places that are torn apart by war and for families that are torn apart and separated. Think about people who are ill and for those with broken relationships. Ask if someone would like to say a prayer or just sit quietly and then eat the bread and say Amen.

Pass the bread around the circle again. When everyone has a piece of bread, ask them to hold it in their hand. Think about people who are lonely who need to know that God is with them and they are not on their own. Think about people who are sad or worried, and people who have lost someone who is close to them. Ask if someone would like to say a prayer or just sit quietly and then eat the bread and say Amen.

Pass the bread around the group again but this time ask everyone to eat it straight away. Say thank you to God for the food we have. Think about the people who are hungry and don't have enough food to eat. Say thank you for the people who run foodbanks and help the hungry.

Dear God thank you that you hear our prayers through Jesus your son. Amen.

Spoken prayer

Leave a short space after each category for the group to remember. If your group is younger, or finds it difficult to be quiet for too long, you could allow one short section of quiet at the end of the prayer or choose one section to remember.

Dear God,

In the quiet help us to remember:

A person we love;

A time we had fun celebrating;

A person who is ill;

A place in the world that needs your help.

Amen



Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf> With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response. However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Make a Mezuzah

A Mezuzah is a small box that is stuck to the right-hand doorpost of Jewish homes. It is a mark that Jewish people live there – just like lamb's blood on the doorframe showed the Angel in Egypt that the home belonged to a Jewish family and so the angel would 'pass over' – an event commemorated by Jesus in the Last Supper and by Jews the world over every year. Inside each mezuzah is some scripture (traditionally Jews use a prayer called the Shema "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One") – you could choose your own favourite sentence or prayer.

You will need:

- A matchbox
- An ice lolly stick
- Masking tape or sticky tape
- Glue
- Some coloured tissue paper (or other decoration)
- Pen and paper
- Scissors

What you do:

Stick the ice lolly stick to the back of the matchbox (lengthways)

Making sure that you leave the ends of the matchbox free (so that it can open) wrap the box in masking tape.

Cover the matchbox with glue and use the tissue paper to decorate it as beautifully as you want.

Cut your paper into a strip that is slightly shorter than the matchbox.

Write your Bible phrase or prayer onto the piece of paper, roll it up and place it inside the box.

Stick the box to the right hand door post (at a slight angle – with the top leaning towards the room the door leads to).

Flatbread

You will need:

- 200g/7oz plain or wholemeal flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 100ml/3½fl oz warm water
- 2 tbsp oil (olive, sunflower or vegetable), plus extra for cooking



What you do:

Place the flour and salt in a large bowl and trickle in the water slowly while mixing it together and then add the oil.



Knead the dough for about 5 mins. You want to create a soft dough. If it is too sticky, add a little more flour or if it is too dry, add a splash of water.

Divide the mixture into 6 balls of dough and roll them out flat using a rolling pin (You may need to sprinkle a little flour on the surface but only use a little as too much will dry out the dough). Don't worry if they aren't perfect circles!

Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat. Take a sheet of kitchen paper and rub a little oil onto the surface of the pan. Cook each flatbread for about 2 minutes on one side – it should puff up a little. Flip the flatbread over using tongs and then cook for a couple of minutes on the other side.

Keep the cooked flatbreads warm, wrapped in foil or a clean tea towel, until the others are cooked.

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Perhaps you and your family or friends have a special story to share about your time with God or Jesus – something you have learned or something you have experienced. Share it together over a meal.
 - Have you ever been to a communion service at your church? If not, why not go along to one in the coming weeks. Does it remind you of the special meal Jesus shared with his followers and of Jesus' death and rising again?
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We hope you enjoyed exploring **The Last Supper** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next month's resources on **Easter Hope**

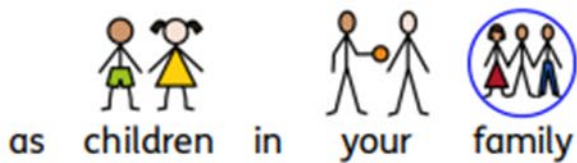
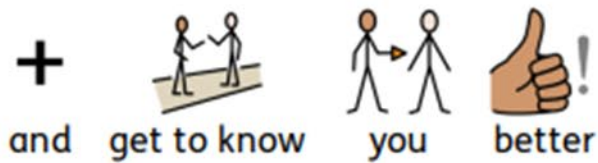
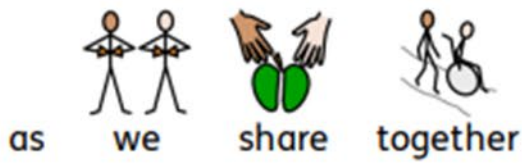




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