



Jesus Feeds the Disciples

Goal: To remember Jesus' Last Supper in the celebration of communion.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Mark 14:12-25

In Mark's Gospel, we find Jesus planning to share the Passover meal with his disciples. This became Jesus' last meal with his disciples and a meal with a very special meaning. Jesus wanted things to be set to share this last meal together.

His disciples followed Jesus' instructions and found a man carrying a water jar who showed them to a large upstairs room where they would gather to eat. The Passover meal commemorated God's grace in liberating the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The "angel of death" passed over the houses of the Israelites (Exodus 12). God gave the "Passover" meal so people would always remember—with gratitude—God's grace in rescuing the people.

In the Passover meal, God fed the people of God. They ate the food and were nourished by the message the meal celebrated. The Passover meal Jesus shared fed his disciples physically and spiritually. Jesus took the bread and wine and said, "This is my body" (Mark 14:22) and "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (v. 24). The Lord's Supper continues to nourish us today—with salvation. We receive grace with gratitude.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children know about special meals—birthdays and meals shared with family on Christmas Eve or Christmas and Easter Sunday. They also know about the special meal shared at church called communion or the Lord's Supper. This story tells them about how this special meal given to us by Jesus began in a room with his disciples in Jerusalem. Birthdays and holidays are times when favorite foods are served and stories are shared. Children can understand how sharing bread and a cup of juice in worship are times when we can remember Jesus and how we can share his love with others.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you prepare to teach this story about Jesus sharing the Passover meal with his disciples, think about your children. If younger children have not taken part in communion in worship, you will need to explain that to them. A trip to the sanctuary to see the bread and cup will help. If you would like to do more research, older children may enjoy learning about a modern Passover meal and the kind of foods that are served to help Jews remember the time when they were slaves in Egypt, before Moses and Miriam led them into freedom: charoset (a mixture of apples, cinnamon, and nuts), matzo (unleavened flatbread), maror (bitter herbs), karpas (vegetable), and an egg. Some may know about this because of having Jewish friends.

O God, you are present to us in the breaking of bread. Be with us always as we live in the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 1, 1a, 15, 18

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

purple cloth

loaf of bread (and
gluten-free option)

cushions/pillows

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1 with cards cut
apart

Responding

Claiming

invited guest,
communion ware

Celebrating

tray, 10-15 small items
from the room

Praying

copies of **GN 2**

Offering

small clear plastic cups,
paint pens, communion
chalice

Extra

copies of **GN 3**

The song is a paraphrase of Psalm 117 and comes from Ghana, a country in Africa. It was originally created in the Twi language, which is shown on **SCM 15**.

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule." Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Provide a gluten-free option for the bread for children who need that alternative.

"Claiming God's Grace" and "Offering God's Grace" require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A** **LD**

Welcome each child with "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt the children to respond, "And also with you." Invite the children to prepare the worship space. Provide a purple cloth, a candle, a Bible, and a loaf of bread to place on the table. Display **SCM 1a** and place some cushions around the room for reclining.

Ask the children to help prepare today's "Responding in Gratitude" activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today's singing. Invite a couple of volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage.

Look at **SCM 1a** and ask the children what they see. Explain to the children that this is unleavened bread, and that we will hear more about the bread in our story today.

Invite older children to do some Bible research. Ask them to find out more about Passover and the Passover meal by reading the following Bible passages: Exodus 12:1-11; Exodus 12:12-13; Exodus 12:14-20; Exodus 12:21-28; and Deuteronomy 16:1-8. Have them consider the following questions and write down what they discover to report back to the group:

- ▼ What is the Passover?
- ▼ What event were the Hebrews, and then the Jewish people, remembering at the Passover celebration?
- ▼ What is prepared and eaten at the Passover celebration?

Singing

M

Sing "Praise God, All You Nations (Da n'ase)"—**MM 4**; **SCM 15**. After you feel that the children know the song, invite them to come up with motions for "praise," "God," "nations," "love," and "forever."

Praying

MS

Invite the children to get comfortable on a cushion or on the floor, to take a few deep breaths, and to sit quietly for a moment. Turn on the candle. Then pray:

God of grace, give us hearts that are grateful for your presence with us. Amen.



Some SCMs are used throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.

Preparing to Hear the Story F C

Encourage conversation by using these discussion starters. Be prepared to share your own stories as well:

- ▼ Tell about one of your family's favorite celebrations or traditions (a first day of school tradition or holiday tradition, and so on).
- ▼ Talk about the preparation that goes into one of these celebrations or traditions.

Offer that, in today's story, Jesus and his disciples share a special meal called the *Passover*. Share that, every year, the Jewish people celebrate this meal to remember that they were once captives in Israel until God sent Moses and freed them. Show **SCM 1a** again and explain that, when the Jewish people had to leave Egypt quickly, they had to bake the bread fast and did not have time to let it rise. The unleavened bread is used as a reminder of this time. This type of bread would also have been used in Jesus' time.

- F** *Notice and listen to children's concerns about fairness. Traditions are unique to each family. Some children may have more at home than others. Celebrate that, while our traditions may be different, we can find joy in what we have.*

Hearing the Story L

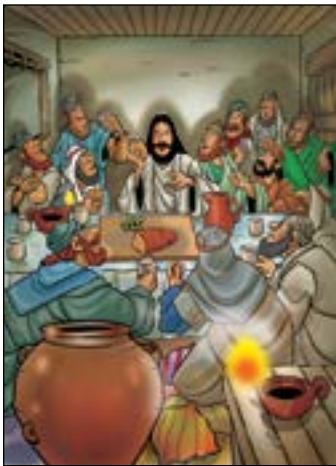
Invite a child to find Mark 14 in the Bible. Have volunteers read Mark 14:12-25. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God." Place the open Bible on the worship center.

After you have told the story, give each participant one of the four story pictures from **GN 1**. Invite the children to color their picture while you read the story again using **SCM 1** or listen to the story audio. Use your voice and expressions to make the story engaging and meaningful. Encourage them to pay attention to when their scene takes place in the story.

Reflecting on God's Grace C

Invite the children to place their scenes in the order of the story for all to see. Several children may have the same scene. Place all similar scenes together and continue the sequencing. Once the participants have the pictures in order, invite them to tell you the story in their own words. Discuss:

- ▼ I wonder, "What do you imagine the disciples thought when Jesus told them to remember him when they ate and drank?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why do you think it is important to remember Jesus?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What celebration does this story remind you of?"



Today's story as told in Luke's Gospel can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



Invite the children to share memories and experiences they have of celebrating communion in worship.

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together “Let Us Break Bread Together”—MM 14; SCM 18. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Claiming God’s Grace



Before the session, invite your pastor or a member of the worship committee to visit the children. Explain that children will interview him or her about communion. If possible, plan to meet in the sanctuary. Set up communion ware that your congregation uses in the space where you will meet.

Before meeting with your guest, ask the children to think about questions they would like to ask about communion, such as:

- Why do we have communion?
- Who prepares the bread and juice?
- What do you like about communion?
- How often does our church celebrate communion?

Make sure each child who would like to ask a question has a question to ask. Introduce your guest and invite the children to ask their questions. Suggest that your guest share anything else they would like the children to know about communion. Encourage the children to see and touch the communion ware, as appropriate. Express gratitude to your guest for meeting with the group.

Celebrating God’s Grace



Remind children that Jesus did something different at the Passover meal as a way to remember him. Play a memory game.

Instruct the children to gather at a table and have someone hand out paper and pencils to each child. While they are doing so, place random items from your room on a tray and cover the tray with a cloth. Place the covered tray on the table among the children. Explain that you will uncover the tray and allow them to study the items for one minute. After one minute, replace the cloth and ask them to list or draw as many items as they can remember—without any help from friends! As a variation, remove an item from the tray and see if the group can remember which item is missing.

Ask:

- I wonder, “How does celebrating communion help us to remember Jesus?”

If you have children who have difficulty writing and spelling, this may be a good opportunity for them to be helpers by distributing paper and pencils, holding the tray, or putting items on the tray.



- ▼ I wonder, “What are some things we can remember about Jesus when we celebrate this special meal?”

LD *A child with learning disabilities may be no less able than other children; they just receive, process, and/or respond differently. If writing or reading is difficult for a child, allow them to participate verbally.*

Praying God’s Grace **LD**

Give each child a copy of **GN 2**. Invite them to decorate the sheet.

As children work, explain that prayers of thanks are an important part of the Passover and communion celebrations. Remind them that, before giving the disciples the bread, Jesus thanked God.

Invite the children to talk about the use of prayers of thanks before meals in their families. Some children may share that they don’t say a prayer or give thanks before meals. Suggest that everyone can bring the prayers on **GN 2** home and try praying and giving thanks before a meal.

Invite the children to write their own prayer of thanks in the blank space. Help children who need assistance in writing. Once decorated, have children cut out their prayer cards. Have them punch a hole in the top left corner of each card and tie them together with string or yarn. Encourage them to take the prayers home to use before meals.



Offering God’s Grace **LG**

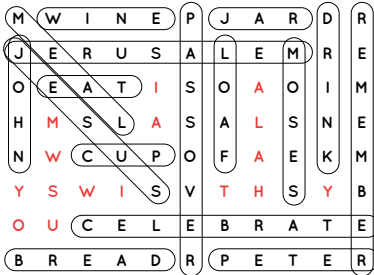
Explain that communion is such an important celebration in the life of the church and a special way to remember Jesus that the pastor regularly takes it to those who are homebound or in the hospital. Create communion cups that can be used for this purpose.

Display the chalice, or communion cup, your church uses on the table during communion. Invite the children to consider what may make a lovely communion cup, such as Christian symbols (cross, dove, fish, grapes, and wheat), a repeating design (a vine, triangles, or spirals), or words of Jesus (“Remember me”). Provide small clear plastic cups and invite the children to use paint pens to decorate them. Give the cups to the pastor so that they may be used in the celebration of communion with homebound or hospitalized members. Ask that a note, and a picture, if possible, be placed in the church newsletter so the faith community may know of the children’s gift to the church.

LG *Providing opportunities for children to welcome others, offer help, and express generosity helps build their confidence. This also helps them learn that they are gifted members of your community.*



GN 3 Solution:



I am always with you.

Extra Activity



Tell the children that celebrating communion is one way we remember Jesus, but we also try to live as he taught us. Hand out copies of **GN 3**.

Invite the children to draw lines through the words from the story. Ask them to circle the remaining letters and write them in the spaces below to see what Jesus told the disciples. Word puzzles can be a challenge for some children. Encourage children who finish first to assist others.

As they work the puzzle, ask:

- ▼ I wonder, “Jesus told us to remember him when we share his special meal with the bread and the cup. What are some other things Jesus told us to do?”

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Share the bread that has been on the worship table, making sure everyone gets a piece. As you eat, invite each child to share one thing they would like others to remember about Jesus.

End with this echo prayer, inviting the children to repeat after you:

God, we thank you for Jesus /
and for his perfect love. /
Help each of us /
to remember him /
in our living /
and in the way we treat others. /
Amen. /

As children leave, give each child a blessing. Say: “(Name), remember Jesus. May the grace of God be with you always.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).



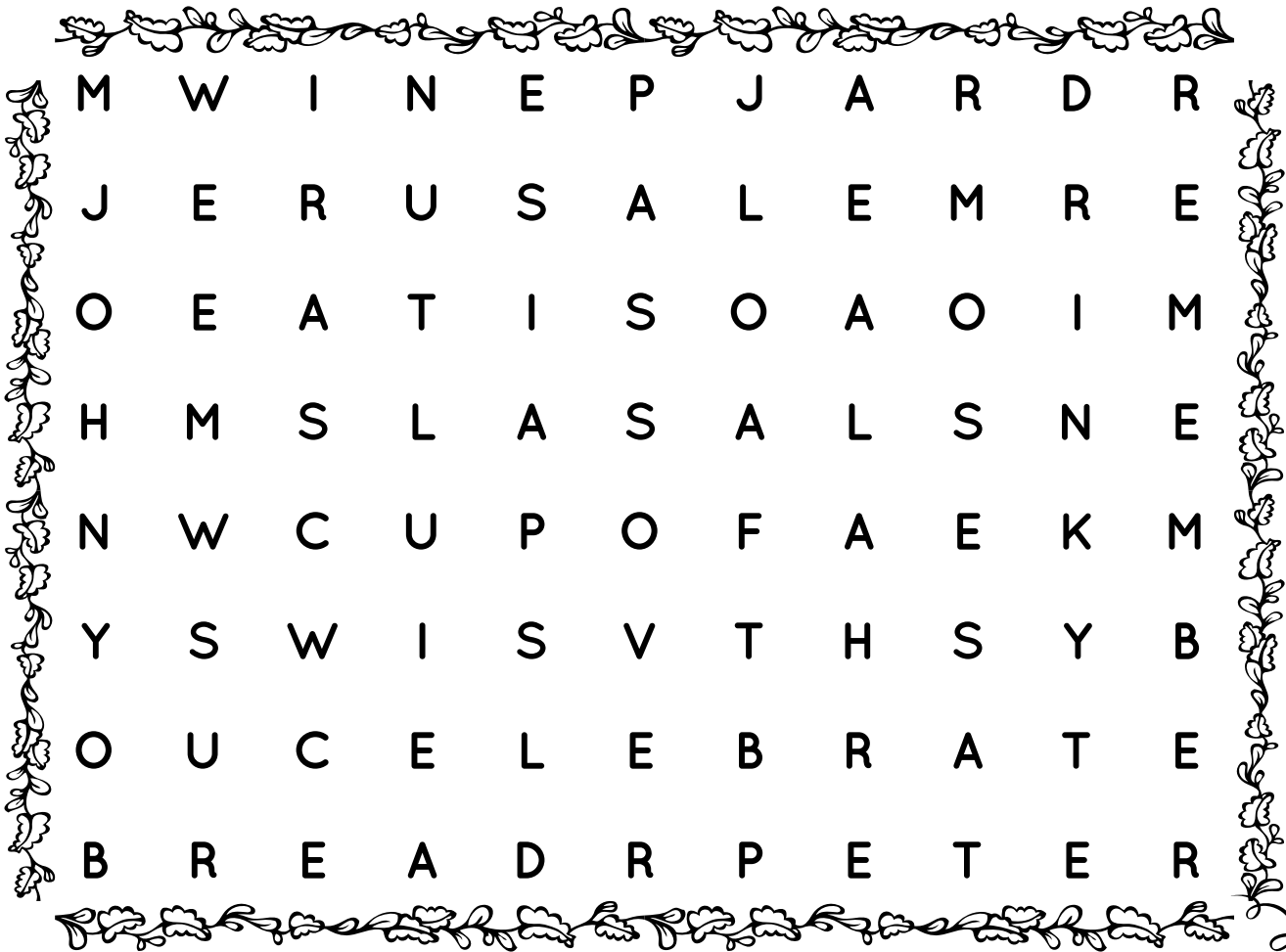
God is great. God is good.
Let us thank God for our food.
By God's hands we all are fed.
Thank you, Lord, for daily bread.
Amen.

Gracious God,
gracious God,
hear our prayer,
hear our prayer.
We bow our heads to thank you,
we bow our heads to thank you.
A-a-men, A-a-men.
(sung to the tune of "Frère Jacques")

If you're grateful and you know it,
clap your hands (*clap clap*).
If you're grateful and you know it,
clap your hands (*clap clap*).
If you're grateful and you know it,
for this food, then you must
show it.
If you're grateful and you know it,
clap your hands (*clap clap*).
*(sung to the tune of "If You're
Happy and You Know It")*

For every comfort we enjoy,
for food before us set,
we thank you, Jesus.
Through your love,
our needs are always met.
Amen.

Lord, we thank you
for the food before us,
the friends and family beside us,
the love between us,
and your presence among us.
Amen.



**W
O
R
D
S**

bread
celebrate
cup
drink
eat
jar

Jerusalem
Jesus
John
loaf
meal
Moses

Passover
Peter
remember
wine

