



Session 2
Spring 2016
Primary

The Last Supper

LUKE 22:1-28

prepare



PRAYER

God, you have entrusted me with these children and this important story. Be in my words today. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To experience Jesus' last meal with his friends

STORY SUMMARY

Judas, one the disciples, met with Jesus' enemies and made plans for his arrest. Jesus sent two disciples to prepare the Passover meal in an upper room of a Jerusalem house. At the meal, Jesus used the Passover bread and wine as signs of his coming suffering. He asked the disciples to remember him with those symbols. When the disciples argued about greatness, Jesus told them that the greatest one is the one who serves.

teaching tips for primary

It would be easy to consider the magnitude of Judas' betrayal of Jesus and think that children have no experience of such things. But the children in your group may have experienced a broad range of betrayals, from small broken promises to abuse by those who should have protected them. Be conscious of creating a safe environment for children to approach this theme.

Today's poignant story moves us closer to Jesus' crucifixion. We see Jesus' love for his friends and his faithfulness to God's message.

Children who are a part of the worshiping community may recognize the similarity between the Last Supper and your congregation's communion or Eucharist services. They are, however, still concrete thinkers. Point out that the bread and wine remind us of the mystery that Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. The bread and wine are symbols—everyday items that remind us of faith events.

Decide which Explore activities you will do, and check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

dig deeper

by Mary Schertz

Holy feasts

Today's text is the familiar story of Jesus' last supper with his intimate circle of friends before the arrest of Jesus. It is set during the holiest celebration of the Jewish calendar—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Passover. This Jewish feast celebrates God's deliverance of Israel for ongoing generations. This means that everything in the story has a heightened significance because of the underlying symbolism. For example, if we go to a movie that is set during Christmas or Thanksgiving, we understand the plot, the dialogue, the music, the scenery, and the symbolism in relation to that particular holiday. Passover also means that pilgrims are pouring into Jerusalem with a lot of excitement and many expectations. The rulers and all those charged with crowd control are probably more anxious than usual. Everything that happens at the Last Supper happens against this backdrop.

Passover reinterpreted

The disciples carry out the preparations for the Passover feast in the conventional way. Jesus, however, introduces variation in the celebration itself. In the ritual he enacts before the seder meal, he connects the ancient feast with his own fate. In Luke's account, Jesus passes one cup and the bread before the meal and then, after the meal, a second cup. The first cup seems to emphasize his stated desire to eat this meal with his disciples because he will not eat again until the kingdom has been fulfilled. What the fulfillment of the kingdom means here is not entirely clear. After the resurrection Jesus does break bread with the disciples who walk with him to Emmaus, and he eats some fish with his disciples in Jerusalem. In this light, those scenes of Jesus eating may be indicating that his death and resurrection fulfilled the kingdom.

The bread that Jesus offers before the meal and the second cup of wine after the meal reveal Jesus' sense of purpose and his desire to be remembered. In both



offerings, Jesus refers to himself and uses the phrase "is given for you," connecting the Passover to his own fate. Luke had already linked the transfiguration to the exodus. In this scene that theme resounds again. To those ancient meanings of liberation, Jesus now adds other layers. The bread is also his body given. The wine is also his blood outpoured. As God delivered Israel from slavery and wandering, so Jesus delivers his disciples and all ongoing generations. The rituals of the bread and wine as Jesus reinterprets them this night are to become part of collective memory. They are to be reenacted among future believers in remembrance of him.

Missing the mark

The rising tensions outside the walls of the guest room where Jesus is eating with his disciples are matched by rising tensions within the room. These tender moments of communion are marred with discord. Jesus notes that the one who will betray him is not, in some sense, the key player. By now, what is going to happen is already building momentum. The act of disloyalty will only harm the betrayer himself. The disciples begin suspecting one another, and that speculation leads them into even more arguments about which of them is the greatest. The inner circle seems to be in a disarray of competition and ill spirit. There is a sense of foreboding.

Our passage ends with Jesus speaking a reprimand into this noisy tension. He tells the disciples that arguments about greatness have no place in their lives. They are not to be like the occupying Romans, with a rigid hierarchy and a show of lordship over others. Rather, they are to follow his own example and act as servants to one another; vying not for places of honor but for opportunities to serve.

gather

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Grapes
- Soda crackers
- Serving plate
- Candle and matches
- Paper circles in different colors

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 22)

to do

- Cut paper circles of different colors.

media connections

- NSW Board of Jewish Education website kids' page on Passover
- *The Last Supper* by Katherine Sully
- Internet search for Last Supper artwork by Leonardo da Vinci, Bohdan Piasecki, Fritz von Uhde, Emil Nolde
- *Setting the Passover Table* booklet at the InterfaithFamily website

BUILD COMMUNITY

Pass a plate of grapes and soda crackers. While sharing food, talk together about foods served on important occasions such as Thanksgiving, birthdays, or other celebrations. Explain that grapes and unleavened bread (somewhat like the crackers) were part of the Jewish Passover meal in today's story. Be sure to check for food allergies before serving food. Gluten-free crackers provide an alternative.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Light a candle. Place a few grapes and crackers at the base of the candle. Sing "Óyenos, mi Dios" from the Shine CD, track 15 (page 24 in the *Year Two Songbook*).

Pray, thanking God for meals shared with loved ones and asking for understanding of today's story. Close with the phrase:

God, hear our prayer.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Set out paper circles of differing colors. Let children choose a circle and ask them to think about how that color makes them feel. Encourage them to remember an experience when they felt that emotion. Give children a few moments to think about two questions: What would you like to say to God about that time, and what do you think God would say to you? Invite children to share if they wish. Then pray "O God, hear our prayer" from page 4 of the Primary leaflet. Practice the line children will say ("O God, hear our prayer") together before beginning the prayer.

Bible memory

Point out the Bible memory poster. Say the two phrases of the verse using the motions practiced in session 1.

The greatest (*raise arms in front of you and overhead*) **among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.** (*Hold hands near body, palms up, then move hands forward away from body, as though offering something to another.*)

—Luke 22:26b

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Point to the Jerusalem poster on the wall. Follow the arrows from point 1 to point 2 across the Jerusalem city portion of the poster. Explain that there would have been many houses and narrow streets leading from the temple to a room where Jesus ate with his friends. Show the picture that goes with number 2.

Open the Bible to Luke 22. Then turn to page 264 in *Shine On: A Story Bible* to find today's story. Tell the story while seated on the floor around a low table with pillows to sit on if you have them. (A folding table in its collapsed position works well for this.)

Before telling the story, introduce the word *covenant*, which may be unfamiliar to children. Define it as "a firm agreement between two or more people, or between God and people." Set the story box with props in front of you, and as you tell the story, remove items from the box as indicated on page 85 of this guide.

Say that right after this story, Jesus' friends started arguing about who was the greatest and the best. But Jesus said:

The greatest (raise arms in front of you and overhead) **among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.** (Hold hands near body, palms up, then move hands forward away from body, as though offering something to another.)

—Luke 22:26b

WONDER AND REFLECT

Slowly put the props back into the box. Reflect on the story using the following questions.

- Imagine Peter and John (and perhaps others) preparing the meal. What would you do to prepare a special meal?
- I wonder how Jesus' friends felt when he talked about suffering and dying.
- I wonder how the bread and the wine in the cup can be signs to remember Jesus.
- I wonder what the disciples thought would happen next.

PEACE NOTES

It may seem like Judas is the bad guy in this story. Plotting against Jesus was a great evil, but we are told that when Judas realized Jesus was going to be put to death, he was sorry and wanted to give back the money (Matthew 27:3–4).

Jesus' response to evil was different from both the "good guys" and "bad guys" in most movies. When Jesus was dying, he said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Invite the children to imagine how Jesus might have treated Judas if he had had the chance to talk with him later.



The Last Supper

Luke 22:1–28

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*

storytelling props

- Bag of coins
- Ceramic or clay jar
- White tablecloth
- Bread
- Cup
- Question mark cutout
- Hymnal or small musical instrument
- Low table and pillows (optional)

poster pack

- Jerusalem poster

to do

- Place items listed on page 85 in a box with a lid. Practice telling the story using the props in the box.

explore

CREATE

Make shape illustrations. Invite children to choose which part of the story is important to them. Make that scene using paper shapes. Provide paper, glue, and small paper shapes (squares, circles, triangles). Children can decide on a design to illustrate the story and glue paper shapes to a sheet of paper to create the picture. Or use adhesive foam shapes available at craft stores.

supplies

- Sheets of paper
- Construction paper cut into small geometric shapes
- Glue
- Adhesive foam shapes (optional)

MOVE

In the Luke account of the Last Supper, Jesus ended the meal with words about serving others. This is also the Bible memory passage. Children can do page 2 in the Primary leaflet by circling ways they have helped or would like to help. After doing the page, children may act out one of the ways to serve. Others can guess what they are acting out. Children can act out their own ideas, or the ones pictured on the page.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Red and blue crayons

RETELL

Children can use the story box and props to retell today's story. Place the props in the box and have the children guess what item you will remove first. Remove the item to reveal whether they were correct. Then ask two or three children to briefly pantomime the corresponding part of the story while you narrate. Paraphrase the story from *Shine On* or use the simplified version on page 1 of the Primary leaflet. If you wish, invite confident readers to help with the narration.

supplies

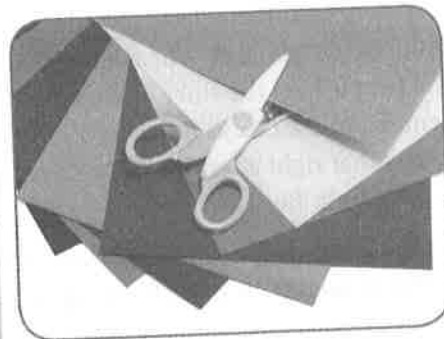
- *Shine On: A Story Bible* or Primary leaflet
- Story box and storytelling props

LEAFLET

Children can finish the pictures and sentences on page 3 of the Primary leaflet. *Answers:* Water jar, bread, cup.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils, crayons



other ideas

- Bake simple flatbreads, such as pancakes, bannock, or tortillas, or use the recipe on page 4 of the Primary leaflet.
- Play a group game in which you all try to stand on a small island (such as a small mat). This is practice for working together rather than being the most important person.
- Wear simple Bible-times costumes and re-create the art on page 264 of *Shine On*. Take a photo.

bles

PRAY

Sing or listen to "Yezu Azali Awa" (Jesus Christ Is Present Here), track 21 on the Shine CD and page 31 in the *Year Two Songbook*.

Pray:

God, we thank you for Jesus' presence here on earth many years ago. We thank you that we can still feel Jesus' presence with us today. Amen.

SEND

Send the children out with Jesus' words from John 20:21.

Jesus spoke these words to his disciples, one of the last times he saw them. "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Peace be with you as you go today.

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.



supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player

A story box sits in front of you as you tell the story, holding all the story props out of sight until you need each one for the story. It's a great way to create a sense of focus and anticipation for the children.

—Beth Jewett
Kingwood, Texas

leader's closing prayer

Who are you this week? Peter and John, following Jesus' instructions? All the disciples, confused by what is going on around you? Judas, turning your back on something, or someone, once held dear? Hold fast to the promise of peace.

God, renew my life. Help me to trust that you are reconciling all things, and guide me in your footsteps. Amen.