



Session 2
Spring 2016
Middler

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 of 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 middler

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 this age are broadening their understanding of worship practices. Many children are drawn to tangible worship rituals. They may recognize the similarity between the Last Supper and your congregation's communion or Eucharist services. Make the connection for them if needed.

Finding the "bad guy" in the story is reinforced for children through popular movies, television, and books. Middlers may be especially interested in the character of Judas, something you can explore during Peace notes. However, keep the main focus of this session on the words and actions of Jesus at this significant moment in his journey.

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

LUKE 22:1-28



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

- Bibles
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- "Stations of the Easter journey" instructions (from Additional resources)
- Die

poster pack

- Community connections poster
- Easter journey poster

to do

- Display the Community connections poster. Look over the activities on the poster so you are prepared to lead the group in any of them.

media connections

- Internet search for Last Supper artwork by Leonardo da Vinci, Bohdan Piasecki, Fritz von Uhde, Emil Nolde
- *The Last Supper* by Katherine Sully
- "Setting the Passover Table" booklet at the InterfaithFamily website
- "Remembrance (Communion Song)" by Matt Redman
- "Here Is This Bread" by Celah K. Pence

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome children by name as they enter. Gather near the Community connections poster. Have one child roll a die. Together, do the activity in the corresponding space on the poster.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing "The Jesus Way," track 11 on the Shine CD. Music and lyrics are on page 18 of the *Year Two Songbook*. Lyrics are also at the back of *Glow*.

Pray a short prayer asking God to inspire you all to follow Jesus' way.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Today's Spiritual practice will work best later in the session (after Wonder and reflect).

Gather near the Easter journey poster. Encourage children to focus on the "Jesus' last meal with his friends" image as you guide them through the reflection process using the instructions on page 85 of this guide.

Bible memory

Help the children find Luke 22 in their Bibles. Explain that this is the text of today's Bible story. Have one person read the Bible memory passage from a Bible. (Make sure everyone knows that the "he" is Jesus.) Remind children of the meanings of any terms they do not remember and say the passage together.

But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the one who serves."

—Luke 22:25–26

teaching tip

If you plan to look at Last Supper art, choose the images you want to share beforehand and download them rather than live searching the Internet with children. (There are many Last Supper parody paintings!) Good sites to try are wikipaintings.org and backtoclassics.com, although a general Internet search will also show more contemporary images.

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Gather at your story area. Turn on or light the candle. Set a reflective tone by silently spreading a purple cloth and laying out *Shine On* open to page 264. Ask someone to open the Bible to Luke 22. Set a cup of grape juice and a basket of pita bread on the cloth.

Read the story from *Shine On*. Read Jesus' instructions for Passover preparation in *sotto voce*. Hold up one of the pitas and break it when Jesus breaks the bread. Hold up the cup when it is mentioned. (Save the cup as the symbol for this week's story.)

WONDER AND REFLECT

Take an unbroken slice of pita bread from the basket. Explain that each child will break off a piece and hand it to the next child in the circle. Start the process by breaking off a piece for the child to your right. Explain that serving food to each other is one way of showing God's love.

Then ponder these questions together:

- Imagine Peter and John (and perhaps others) preparing the meal. What would you do to prepare a special meal?
- How do you feel when you hear Jesus' words 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.

teaching tip

Today's Spiritual practice would work well following the story and questions. See page 85 at the back of this guide.

PEACE NOTES

Think together of a few current movies. Can children identify the "bad person" in each one?

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.

teaching tip

We don't know Judas' motives for betraying Jesus. Judas may have thought Jesus came to be king on earth, replacing the Roman rulers. Some historians wonder if Judas thought Jesus was taking too long to become king and needed a little push. None of this excuses his actions, of course.



The Last Supper

Luke 22:1-28

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Candle and matches/lighter

storytelling props

- Cup (or goblet) with juice
- Basket with pita bread
- Purple cloth

to do

- Practice telling the story with props.

explore

CREATE

Supply large paper and a variety of art supplies for children to draw a large picture or mural of Jesus eating at a table with his disciples. Children could glue cloth onto the picture as a tablecloth. Encourage children to put themselves (and friends and family, if space allows) at or near the table. Ask the group what they might talk about with Jesus. What questions would they ask him? What favorite stories of Jesus might they ask him to tell?

supplies

- Large paper
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils
- Piece of cloth
- Glue

RETELL

Give each child one (or more) of the story boxes from page 86 in this guide. Invite the group to put them in order. Then challenge them to tell the story with fewer boxes. Which events were the most important? Save the boxes for use in next week's session.

supplies

- "The Last Supper" story boxes (from Additional resources)

GLOW

Children will explore pages 4–5 in *Glow*. These pages call children to ponder Jesus' reasons for wanting to celebrate Passover with his friends and help them make a connection to the importance of the event even today. If needed, talk briefly with children about your church's practices of Holy Communion or invite a pastor to do so.

supplies

- *Glow* magazines
- Pencils



CONNECT

Today's story in *Shine On* is compiled from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Have children look up the Last Supper passages and compare them (Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:10–26; Luke 22:1–28). What do they notice that is the same or different?

Then turn to page 6 in *Glow*, which highlights an important part of Luke's version of this story. Read through the service ideas and have the group add a few more to the list. Then have individuals each choose one mode of service to act out while others guess what they are portraying.

For smaller groups: Since you will have fewer guessers, try drawing pictures for each other to guess rather than acting out the service ideas.

supplies

- Bibles
- *Glow* magazines
- Pencils

other ideas

- Create a "frozen scene" for each of "The Last Supper" story boxes copied from page 86. Take pictures and view them as children retell the story.
- Play a game that involves memory and discuss what things Jesus might have wanted us to remember about him.
- Bake simple flatbreads, such as pancakes, bannock, or tortillas.

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

Remind the group that Jesus spoke about a “new covenant” between God and people, or a new kind of relationship. Have a child find and read Jeremiah 31:31–33.

Send children with this blessing:

Go as members of the new covenant, knowing that you belong to God.

supplies

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



I love the idea of having a candle during worship and story time, but a real candle was disruptive for my group of children. I now use an LED candle. I also keep it close to me to reduce the “warming of hands,” touching the “flame,” and “blowing it out” that even an LED candle can tempt a child to try.

—Rachel Nussbaum Eby
Goshen, Indiana

leader’s closing prayer

Imagine yourself at the table with Jesus. What would you want to say or do? What would you want Jesus to say or do?

God, lead me deeper into your presence this Lent and Easter season. Draw me closer to your mysterious and wonderful love. Amen.

looking ahead

Next week’s Create has several different craft options. Review pages 8–9 of *Glow*, choose which one(s) you want to offer, and gather the necessary supplies.